

Idaho's conservative scorecard to hold lawmakers accountable for their votes.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 2024 edition of the Idaho Freedom Index! In its 12 years of existence, the Idaho Freedom Index provides the most comprehensive and powerful indicator of how our legislators' votes reflect the principles of restoring liberty, protecting rights, limiting government, reducing taxes, and honoring the Constitution. It is the "true north" for assessing the performance of the legislature and, more specifically, seeing how legislators either promote freedom principles or undermine them.

I have the unique perspective of holding several roles in public policy and the Idaho policy process. I've been a citizen taxpayer, a Ph.D. economics professor for 25 years, a three-term legislator, a senior policy analyst, and now the president of the Idaho Freedom Foundation. I know what good policy looks like and I also know the pressures and conflicts put on a legislator who must cast yea or nay votes on every bill.

Based on my experience in these areas, I can say the Idaho Freedom Index provides legislators with essential information and details about the bills before them. Legislators can't possibly read every bill, but the Idaho Freedom Foundation can and does. The dispassionate, objective analysis from IFF works to help legislators make their best votes based on the information from our metrics of solid conservative values, Constitutional integrity, and fiscal restraint.

To understand how the Freedom Index works, go to page five for a QR code that will lead you to the entire set of metrics each bill is weighed against. The analysis of each rated bill simply squares the bill with the freedom metrics. If you agree with the metrics, you will undoubtedly agree with virtually all the bill ratings and the legislator grades that follow.

Ultimately, the actions and votes of the legislators determine Idaho policy. Let's look at the results of the 2024 legislative session. It was disappointing on many fronts. We have seen little movement on school choice, a growing distrust of free markets, increasing dependence on federal spending, heightened dependence on government programs, more attacks on freedom of speech, and a historic disregard for fiscal responsibility. Our Freedom Index, apart from the legislative outcomes, gives the most accurate assessment of how legislators themselves support or oppose freedom based on their votes. So, even though the legislature as a whole has not been particularly conservative or freedom-oriented, we can see there are a few all-star legislators who hold the line. We also see the cellar-dwellers on the index who seem to work against the values of freedom and limited government. Despite being a so-called "red state," many legislators (regardless of political party) vote along liberal lines, scoring in the F range of the Index. We have serious work to do to restore freedom in Idaho.

In addition to the Idaho Freedom Index, we have another, similar measure to track bills and legislators on how they adhere to the principles of fiscal restraint (the Idaho Spending Index). These indices are the gold standard for tracking state legislators. **No other state policy center does this–only the Idaho Freedom Foundation.**

The Idaho Freedom Index and the Spending Index inform all of Idaho on how the legislature works and more importantly how each legislator performs. We ask that you carefully review the Index and the scores as you evaluate office holders and ask that you consider supporting the Idaho Freedom Foundation in its efforts. Please use the envelope to make a donation and keep this important work going!



Kind regards, in Liberty, **Ron Nate, Ph.D.** President, Idaho Freedom Foundation

THE GOOD AND THE BAD BILLS OF 2024

Many great bills die, but many bad bills pass. What's wrong with Idaho? The IFF carefully tracks and considers all legislation running through the Idaho Capitol. Here are the best and worst pieces of legislation introduced and considered this year. Idaho has some work to do!

Top bills of the year:

Senate Bill 1314: A bill to allow the state to invest idle state treasury money in physical gold and silver, thereby preserving its real value in times of high inflation and debt risk. Final disposition: DEAD – Vetoed by Governor Brad Little

House Joint Memorial 11: A bill that called on the U.S. Congress to take decisive action against illegal immigration on our nation's southern border and to impeach President Joe Biden for his treasonous treatment of the matter.

Final disposition: DEAD – Failed on the House floor

House Bill 419: A bill to require the effective repeal of Medicaid expansion in Idaho unless significant cost-saving measures are implemented and reform benchmarks are met.

Final disposition: DEAD – Failed in the House Health and Welfare Committee

House Bill 447: Establishes the Idaho Parental Choice Tax Credit which allows parents and legal guardians to be able to choose the educational services that meet the needs of their individual children.

Final disposition: DEAD – Failed in the House Revenue and Taxation Committee

House Bill 493: A bill to prohibit the state and its political subdivisions from requiring people to use face masks or other face coverings to supposedly prevent or slow the spread of a disease.

Final disposition: DEAD – Blocked by Senate State Affairs Chair Jim Guthrie

House Bill 668: A bill to prohibit the use of taxpayer funds and government facilities for genital mutilation surgeries.

Final disposition: PASSED – Signed into law by Gov. Brad Little

House Bill 615: A bill to make illegal aliens ineligible for some types of taxpayer-funded, public benefits in Idaho. Final disposition: DEAD – Failed in the House Health and Welfare Committee

Senate Bill 1357: A bill to prohibit the establishment of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) offices, hiring DEI employees, and mandating DEI training in Idaho's higher education institutions.

Final disposition: DEAD – Blocked by Senate State Affairs Chair Jim Guthrie

Worst bills of the year:

House Bill 633: This bill further expands Medicaid to offer increased postpartum coverage. Final disposition: PASSED – Signed into law by Gov. Brad Little

Senate Bill 1380: This bill creates the office of health and social services ombudsman.

Final disposition: PASSED – Signed into law by Gov. Brad Little

Senate Bill 1253: This measure would impose criminal liability on smartphone and tablet manufacturers whose devices do not automatically activate censorship filters. Final disposition: DEAD – Held in the House State Affairs Committee

Senate Bill 1456: This budget appropriates \$4.7 billion to the Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Medicaid for fiscal year 2025. This is the largest welfare budget in state history.

Final disposition: PASSED – Signed into law by Gov. Brad Little.

House Bill 636: This bill would create an Office of Early Childhood Services to expand government services and encourage more people to depend on the state. Final disposition: DEAD – Held in House Education Committee

Senate Bill 1445: This budget would have created, among other things, a new entitlement program that would hook school-aged children on food stamps, regardless of their parent's income.

Final disposition: DEAD - Failed on the Senate floor

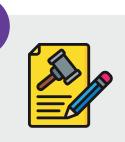
Senate Bill 1461: This budget spends nearly \$1.4 billion on the Idaho Transportation Department, adds 53 new, permanent employees to the department, utilizes federal deficit spending to support one-third of its budget, and keeps a dilapidated building in Idaho hands.

Final disposition: PASSED – Signed into law by Gov. Brad Little

Full a full list of Index-rated bills, visit our site https://IDFree.us/2024Bills

THE FREEDOM INDEX

How Does It Work?



BILL INTRODUCTION

A bill gets introduced in either chamber by being read for the first time and referred to a committee. This is the first time that the language of a bill becomes public.

RATING



+1 point for each instance of expanding freedom-oriented policy.

The sum of all points assigned to each metric gives the bill score.



-1 point for each instance of government expansion and restriction on freedom.

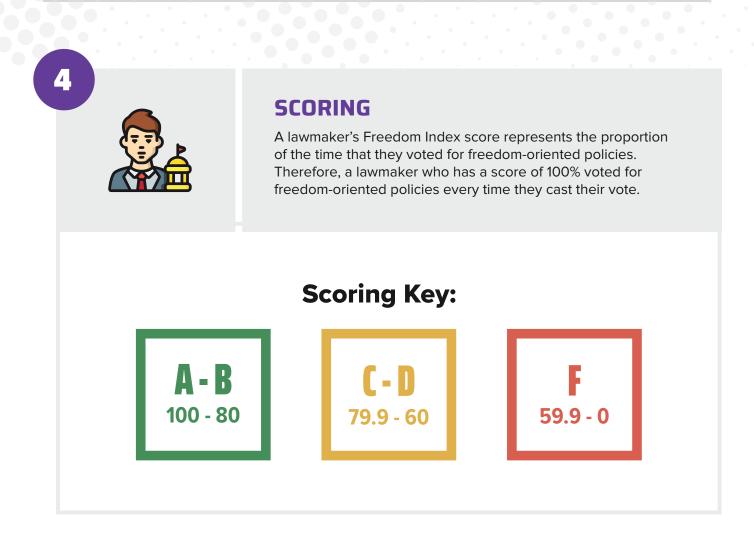




VOTING

As a bill moves through the legislative process, lawmakers receive the points assigned to that bill. Conversely, if they vote against a bill, they receive the inverse number of points. For example, a lawmaker who votes for a bill rated +3 would receive all three positive points. However, a lawmaker who votes against the same bill would receive -3 points on their score.







VOTER EDUCATION

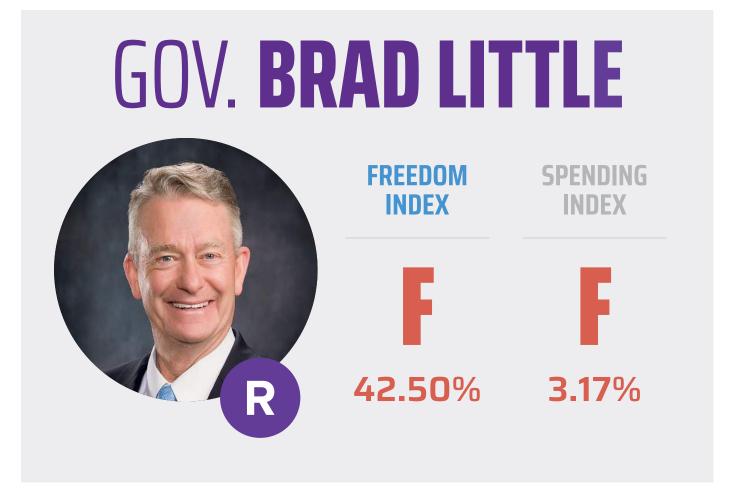
Bill ratings and legislator scores help constituents better understand the type of legislation moving through the statehouse and the true voting behavior of their lawmakers. This cultivates a more informed and active constituency in Idaho.



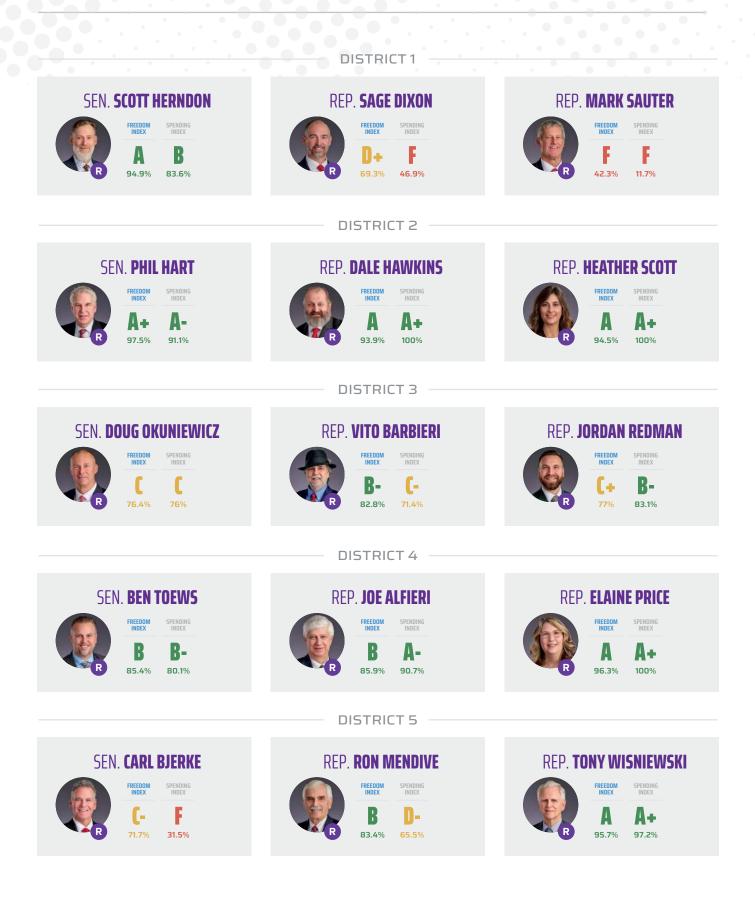
To view our metrics for both the freedom and spending indices, be sure to visit **idahofreedom.org/metrics.**

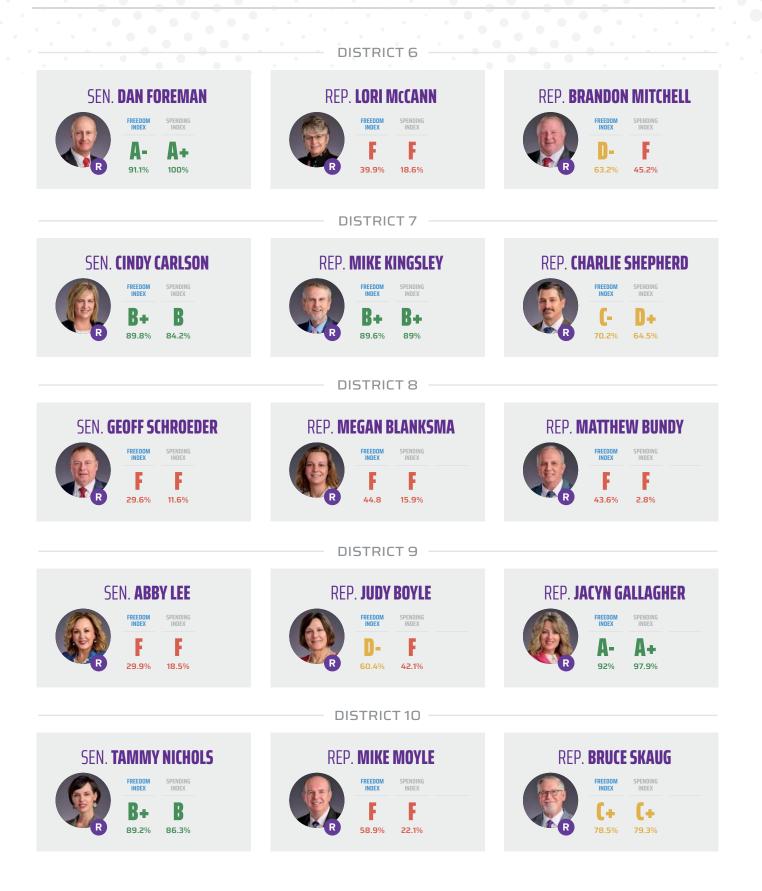
THE GOVERNOR'S SCORE

How conservative is Idaho's executive office? The Idaho Freedom Foundation provided analysis on 199 of the 331 bills that landed on Governor Little's desk this year. Overall, he earned failing grades on controlling the size of government and fiscal conservatism.



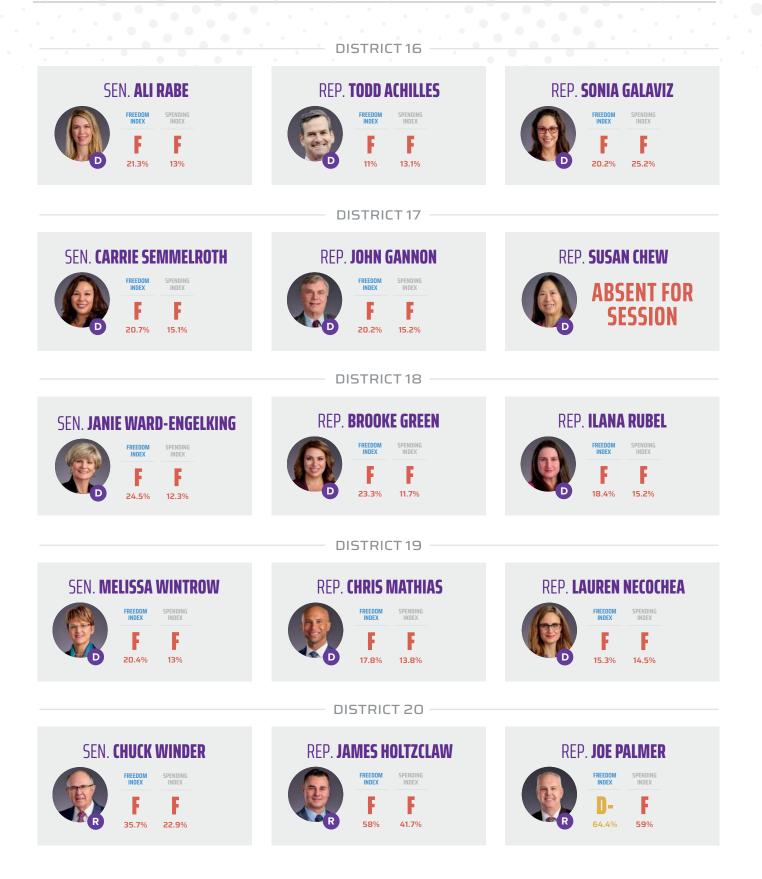
NOTE: The Idaho Education Index has been excluded from this year's publication due to an inadequate sample of bills voted on in the legislature. A mere 10 bills of the 23 rated by the Idaho Freedom Foundation were considered on the floor in either chamber. This small sample distorts the true position of lawmakers on education issues and limits the index's usefulness to constituents.



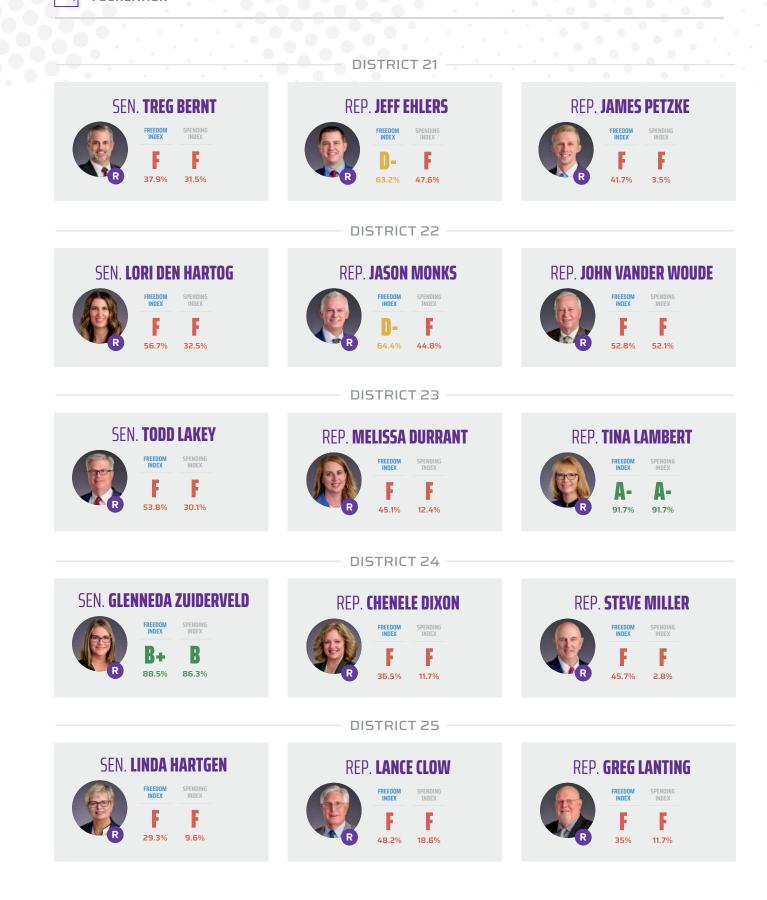




SEN. CHRISTOPHER TRAKEL	REP. CHRIS ALLGOOD	
INDEX INDEX R C+ C+ 77.1% 78.8%	REP. CIRCIP ALLOUDD Image: speed of the speed of th	REP. JULIE YAMAM REP. JULIE YAMAM REDOW R
	DISTRICT 12	
SEN. BEN ADAMS	REP. JEFF CORNILLESImage: state	REP. JARON CRAN
	DISTRICT 13	
SEN. BRIAN LENNEY	REP. BRENT CRANEImage: state sta	REP. KENNY WROT
	DISTRICT 14	
SEN. C. SCOTT GROW	REP. TED HILL Image: state stat	REP. JOSH TANNE FREDOM REP. JOSH TANNE REDM Be- B9-9%
	DISTRICT 15	







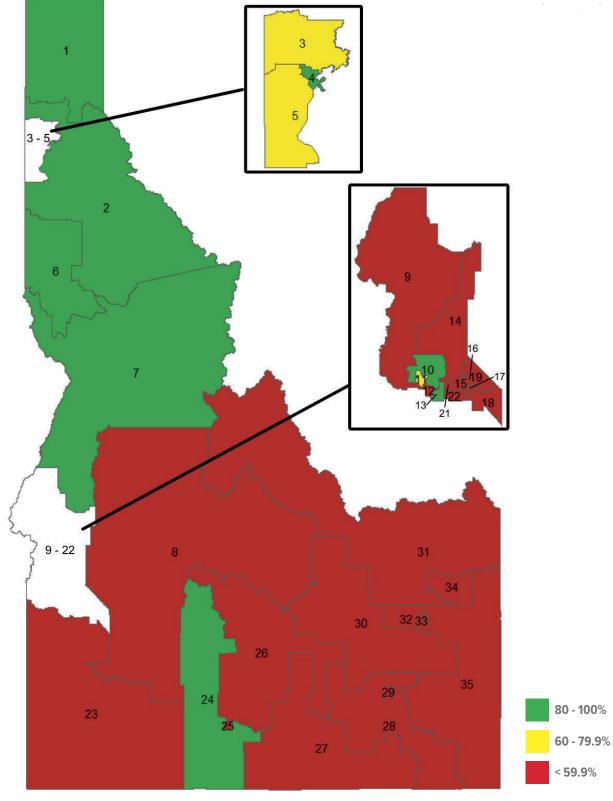






FREEDOM INDEX HEAT MAP

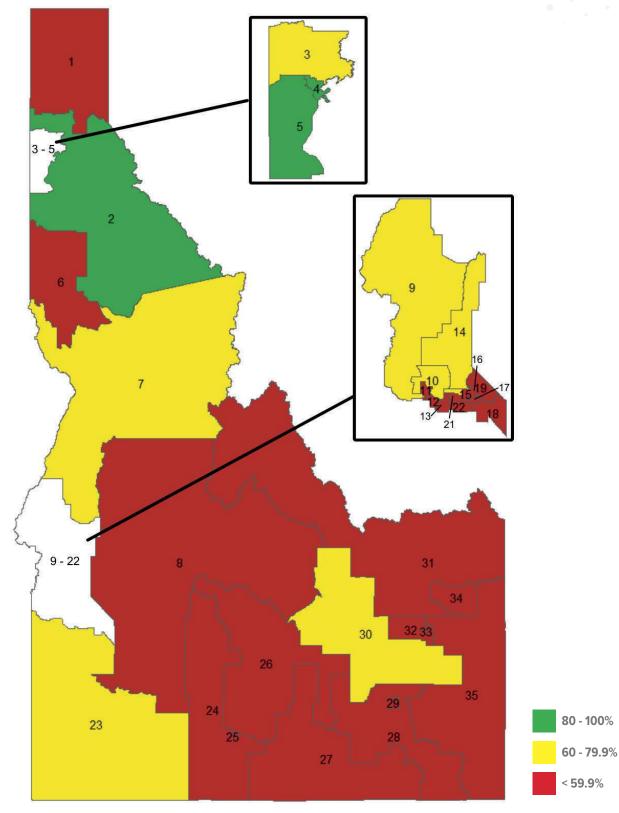
Senate



*This map presents the Freedom Index scores of each Senator by district.



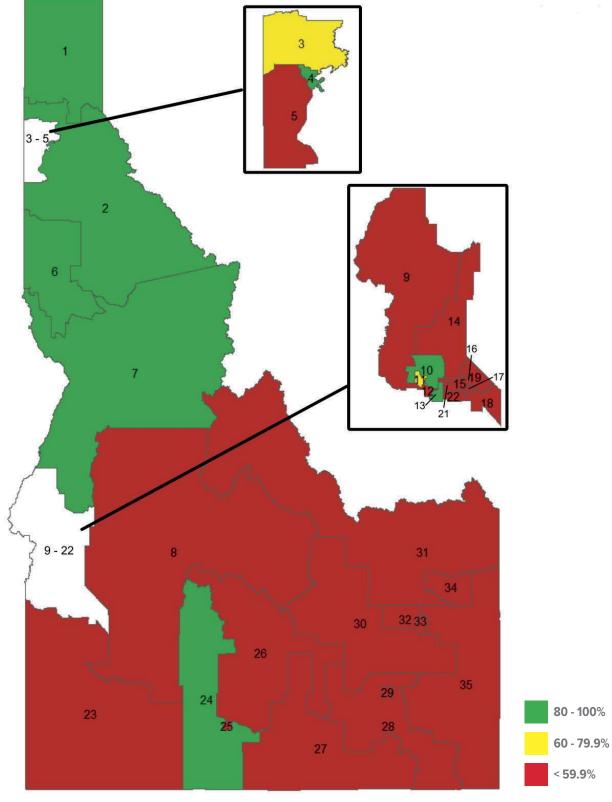
House



*This map presents the Freedom Index scores in the House of Representatives by district. Since each district has two representatives, the colors represent the average of the two scores.

SPENDING INDEX HEAT MAP

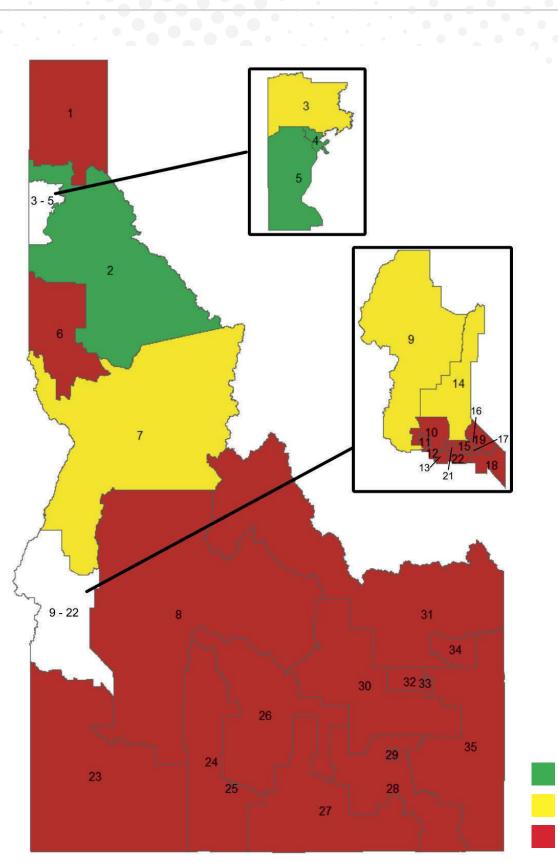
Senate



*This map presents the Spending Index scores of each Senator by district.



House



*This map presents the Spending Index scores in the House of Representatives by district. Since each district has two representatives, the colors represent the average of the two scores. 80 - 100%

60 - 79.9%

< 59.9%

LETTER FROM THE POLICY DIRECTOR

How much of your money did the government take from you this year? As your paycheck gets smaller and tax season eats into your savings, I'm sad to say the odds are your lawmakers aren't working to save you money. In fact, some are actively working against you, spending to support the bureaucracy by dipping into your pocketbook.

This year was marked by a major budget fight to separate the maintenance — bare bones — parts of the budget from any extra, optional spending asked for by agencies. The goal was to end the old "all or nothing" approach to funding executive branch agencies. The entrenched establishment feared this transparency so much that nine so-called Republicans in the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee worked with the Democrats to block the reform. They failed in their attempt, but Idaho's spending problem is still out of control.

The total budget for the next fiscal year is nearly \$13.9 billion. This figure is about \$237 million more than the governor's ask. In fact, it's the second largest increase from the governor's request in two decades!

This exorbitant spending is made worse by how our state plans to finance the excess. Idaho adds to our \$35 trillion national debt by using federal money to bankroll two-fifths of our state budget. This way, Idaho has the appearance of a "balanced budget" but benefits from the D.C. borrowing scheme. This is unsustainable and will harm generations of Idahoans.

This year's efforts for budget transparency, like any reform, will only be as conservative as the lawmakers doing the voting. This year's Spending Index exposed a supermajority of legislators who voted to grow spending more than half of the time. This doesn't bode well for the taxpayers footing the bill.

The establishment hides the dependency caused by new programs, handouts, and staff behind a thin veil of benevolence and service. However, the fact is that this expansion of government harms the stable, self-sufficient quality of life that is synonymous with being an Idahoan. We should expect better from our lawmakers.

This year's Spending Index shines much-needed light on Idaho's spending problem. At the Idaho Freedom Foundation, we will not back down in the fight to preserve our communities, our liberty, and the Idaho way of life.

Sincerely, Niklas Kleinworth, *Policy Director*



THE RUBBER STAMP CAUCUS

Idaho's spending is on the rise. This year's appropriations near **\$13.9 billion.** This is the second largest increase from the governor's request in two decades! Who are the biggest spenders in the legislature? The following lawmakers exercised no discretion over spending your tax dollars, voting in favor of every single budget bill that came before them. The following lawmakers spent your tax dollars by voting in favor of every single budget bill that came before them.

These lawmakers are the select few who never saw a budget they didn't like.



RE

Rep. Matt Bundy	R	House	District 08
Sen. Kevin Cook	R	Senate	District 32
Rep. Wendy Horman	R	House	District 32
Sen. Dave Lent	R	Senate	District 33
Rep. Steve Miller	R	House	District 24
Rep. Britt Raybould	R	House	District 34
Rep. Jon Weber	R	House	District 34

Honorable Mentions: These lawmakers missed the cut by less than two votes.

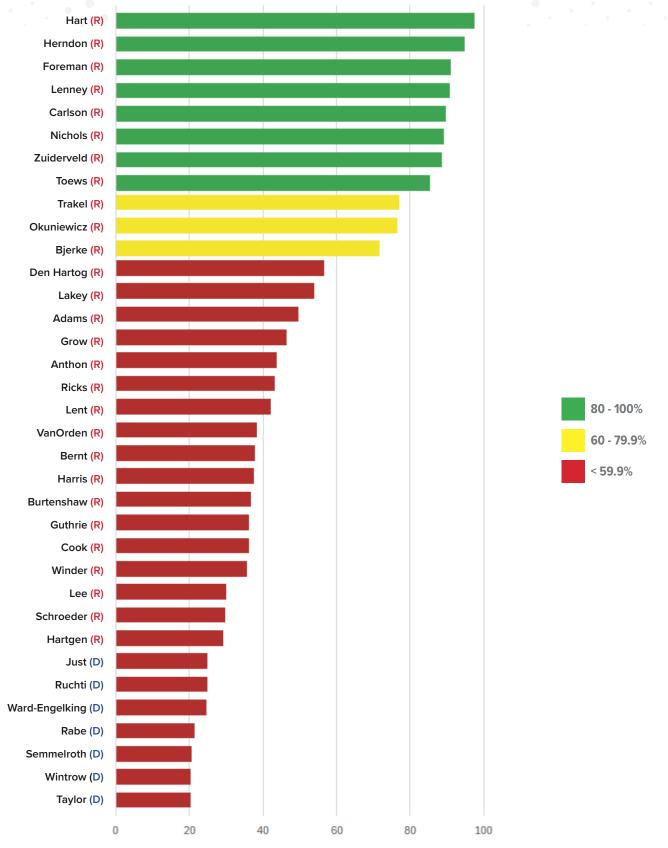


P

Rep. Rod Furniss	R	House	District 31
Rep. Clay Handy	R	House	District 27
Rep. James Petzke	R	House	District 21
Sen. Kelly Anthon	R	Senate	District 27
Rep. Jeff Cornilles	R	House	District 12
Sen. Linda Hartgen	R	Senate	District 25
Rep. Jack Nelsen	R	House	District 26
Sen. Julie VanOrden	R	Senate	District 30

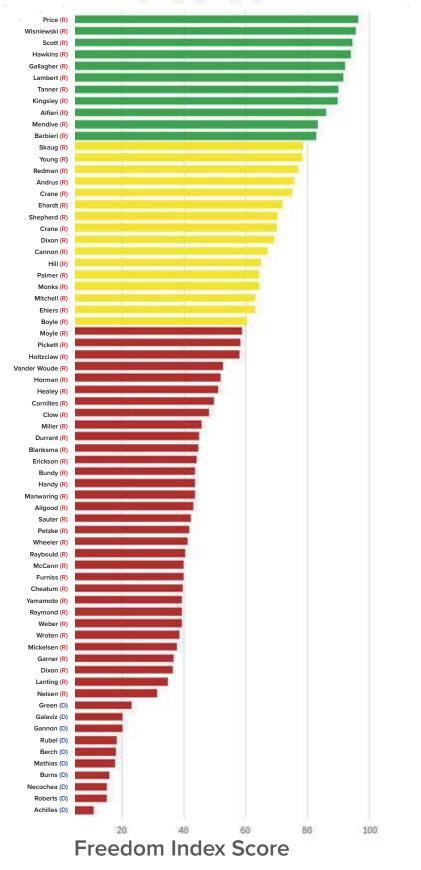
HOW DO LAWMAKERS STACK UP?

Freedom in the Senate





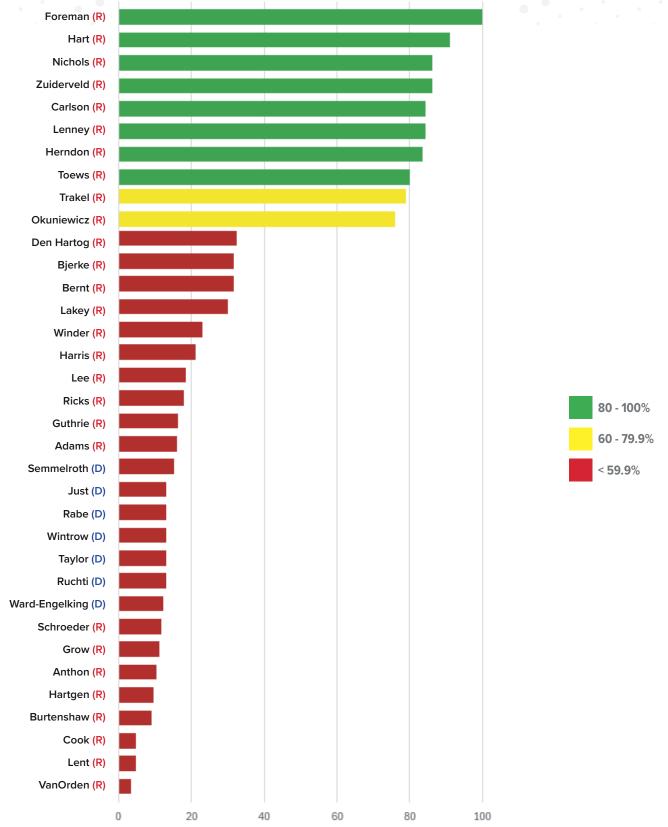
Freedom in the House





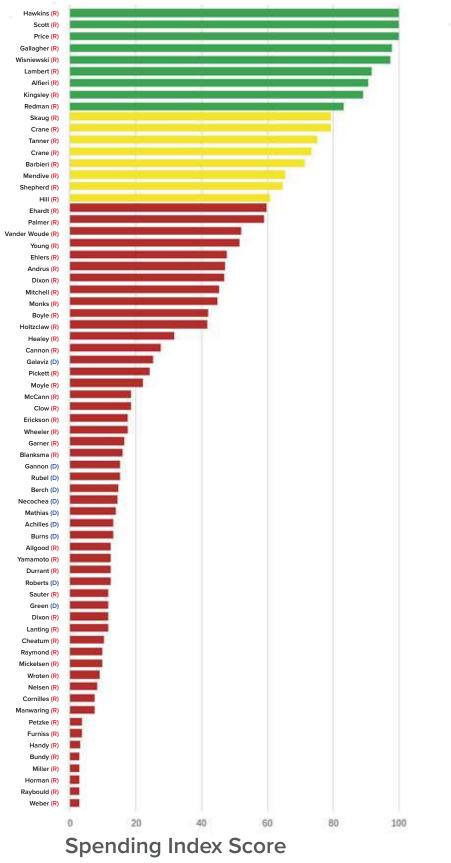
HOW DO LAWMAKERS STACK UP?

Spending in the Senate





Spending in the House





802 W. Bannock St. Suite 405 Boise, Idaho 83702 Non-Profit US Postage PAID Permit No. 417

2024 IDAHO FREEDOM INDEX







Index.IdahoFreedom.org

802 W. Bannock St. Suite 405 Boise, Idaho 83702 208.258.2280