

**American Politics in Two
Dimensions:
Left, Right and Libertarian**

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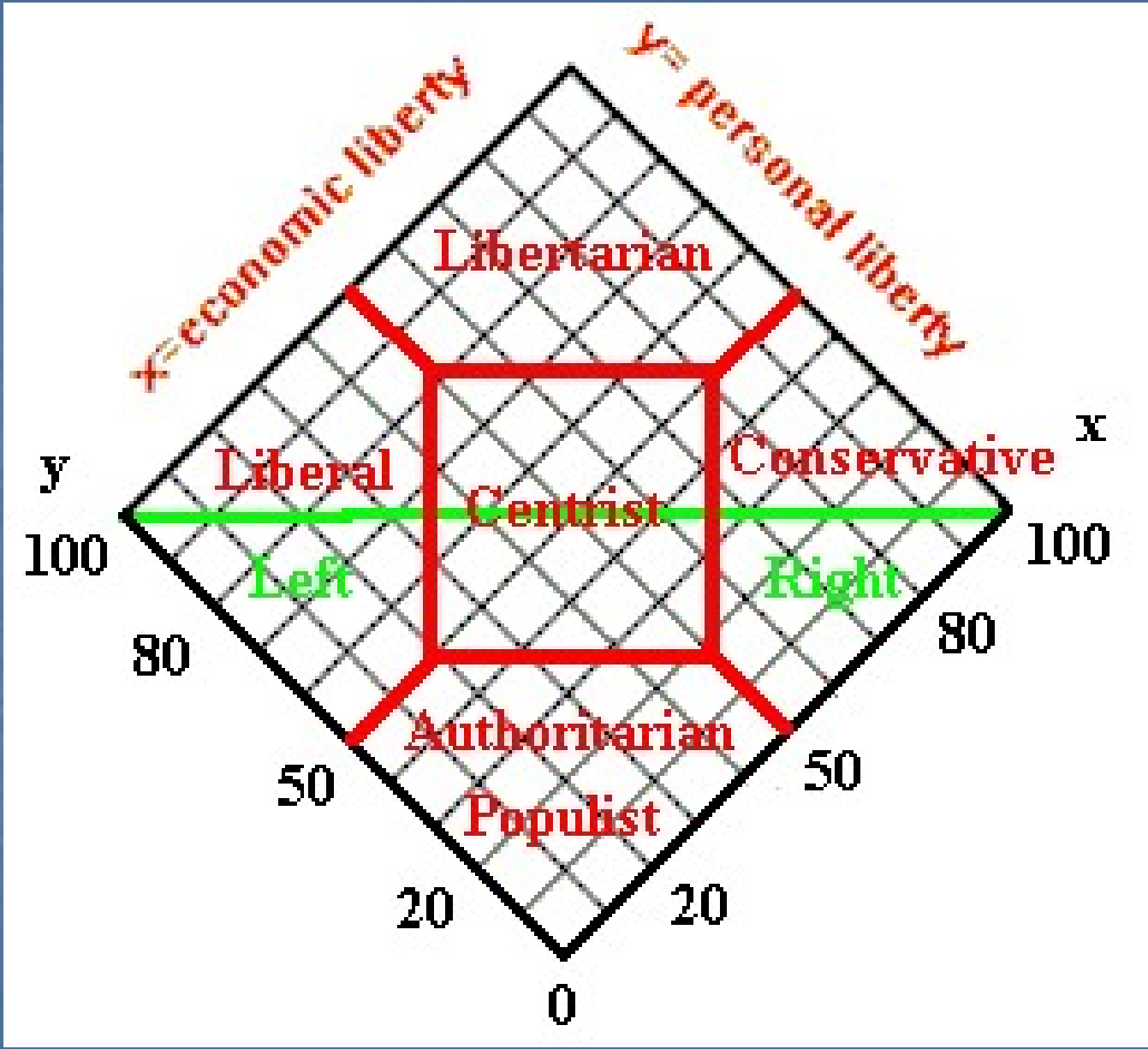
Acknowledgements:

- **David Nolan** innovator of the two-dimensional political diagram
- **Don Ernsberger** who first applied it to an index of Congressional voting
- **Marshall Fritz** who developed "the world's smallest political quiz."
- And those who have helped me, through the years, compile my Index of Congress, most especially **Mike Holmes** and **Bill Westmiller**



You and I are told increasingly that we have to choose between *a left or a right*. There is only *an up or down*: *Up*, to man's age-old dream – the ultimate in individual freedom consistent with law and order – *or, down* to the ant heap of totalitarianism.

Ronald Reagan, Republican
National Convention, 1964



What is freedom?

- the right to be left alone
- to enter into relations with others based only on mutual consent
- to have a well-defined sphere of privacy in which your behavior is nobody else's business
- to buy and to sell as you and your counter-party agree.

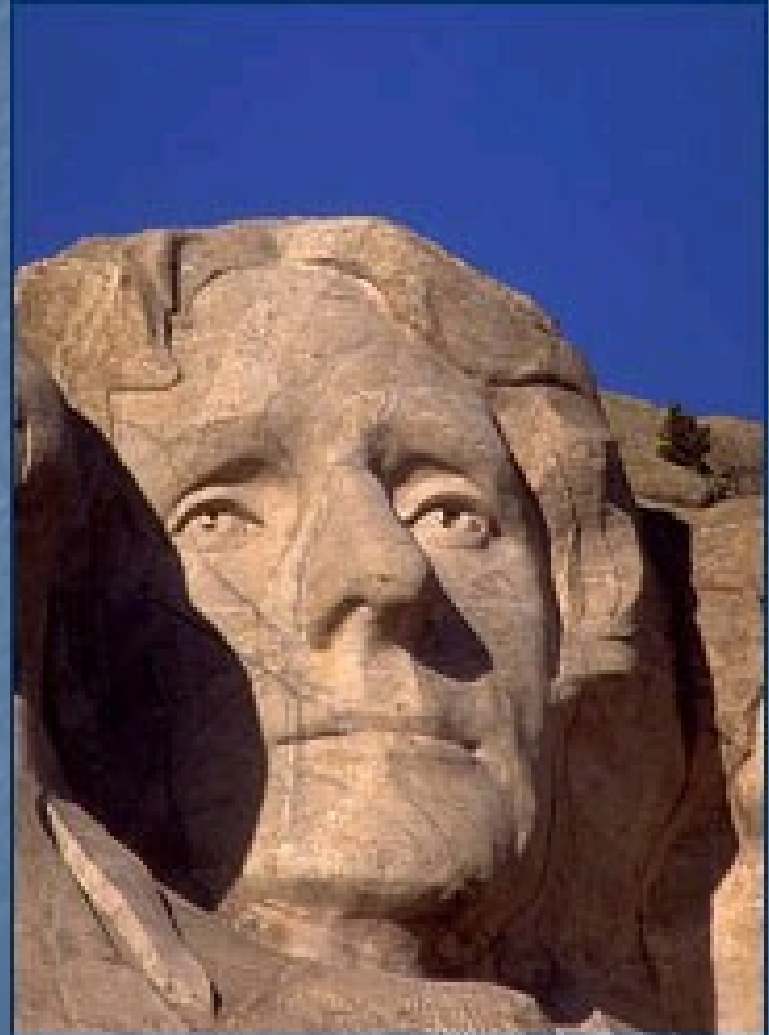
Lao-tzu

- “wei-wu wei”
- or, “By acting without direction, all things will be in spontaneous order.”



Thomas Jefferson

- "That government is best which governs least."



Benjamin Franklin

"Mind Your Business"



Limits of Liberty?

- Children and other incompetents
- Theft and fraud, trespass and negligence
- Endangerment
- Taxation

Why Two Dimensions?

- Some people are more sensitive to freedom in the area of private behavior, and
- Other people are more sensitive to freedom in the area of marketplace behavior.

What is your position?

- I'll ask two sets of five questions.
- The first set of five pertain to private behavior.
- And, the second, to marketplace behavior.
- For each question, indicate whether you agree, disagree, or are neutral.

Personal Liberties

Should you have the political right to:

1. Own and watch a pornographic video?
2. Have sexual relations with adults?
3. Not wear a seatbelt?
4. Use unapproved medical treatments?
5. Consume marijuana?

- For each of these five questions, give yourself 20 points if you agree, 10 points if you are neutral, and 0 points if you disagree.
- Then, add up your points on these five questions.
- This is your score in the Personal Liberties dimension of the two-dimensional political diagram.

Economic Liberties

Should you have the political right to:

1. Work for less than the minimum wage?
2. Buy any normal products made overseas?
3. Not hire somebody because of race?
4. Not participate in Social Security?
5. Not support government welfare?

- For each of these five questions, give yourself 10 points if you agree, 5 points if you are neutral, and 0 points if you disagree.
- Then, add up your points on these five questions.
- This is your score in the Economic Liberties dimension of the two-dimensional political diagram.

- Once you have your total points on each of Personal and Economic Liberties, you should plot your position on the two-dimensional diagram.
- First, starting from point "0," move northwest until you reach your score on Personal Liberties. Then, move northeast until you reach your score on Economic Liberties.

Rasmussen Research

2000 survey of U.S. population:

- Libertarians 16 percent
- Liberals 13
- Centrists 32
- Conservatives 7
- Authoritarians or Populists 14
- "borderline" 17

John Blondell and Brian Gosschalk

Beyond Left and Right

1990 survey:

	U.S.	U.K.
■ Libertarians	20 percent	19 percent
■ Liberals	13	18
■ Centrists	12	15
■ Conservatives	35	36
■ Populists	20	13

Gallup Survey

- Two question approach:
- First, is the government doing too much, or is the government doing too little?
- Second, should the government promote values, or should the government not promote values?

Gallup Survey (cont'd)

- Government doing too much PLUS Government should promote values = Conservative
- Government doing too much PLUS Government should not promote values = Libertarian
- Government doing too little PLUS Government should not promote values = Liberal
- Government doing too little PLUS Government should promote values = Populist

Gallup Survey (cont'd)

	Lib.	Pop.	Libt.	Con.	"Und."
■ 1998	13	17	21	34	15
■ 1997	13	17	24	31	15
■ 1996	13	20	20	35	12
■ 1994	15	20	20	32	13
■ 1993	13	23	22	31	11

2002 Survey by WashPost, etc.

- Young people much more in favor of free-market policies such as privatization of social security and school vouchers, and
- Much more tolerant of private behavior.

RLC Index of Congress

- Begun in 1989
- Based on 20 roll call votes on Personal Liberties, and 20 roll call votes on Economic Liberties
- Average for Congress is always 50-50
- <http://www.republicanliberty.org/>
- <http://www.vote-smart.org/>

RLC Index of Congress (cont'd)

- Similar to Libertarian Party's Index of Congress of the early 1990s, published in *L.P. News*
- Similar to David Boaz' one-time Index of Congress, published in *Liberty Magazine*

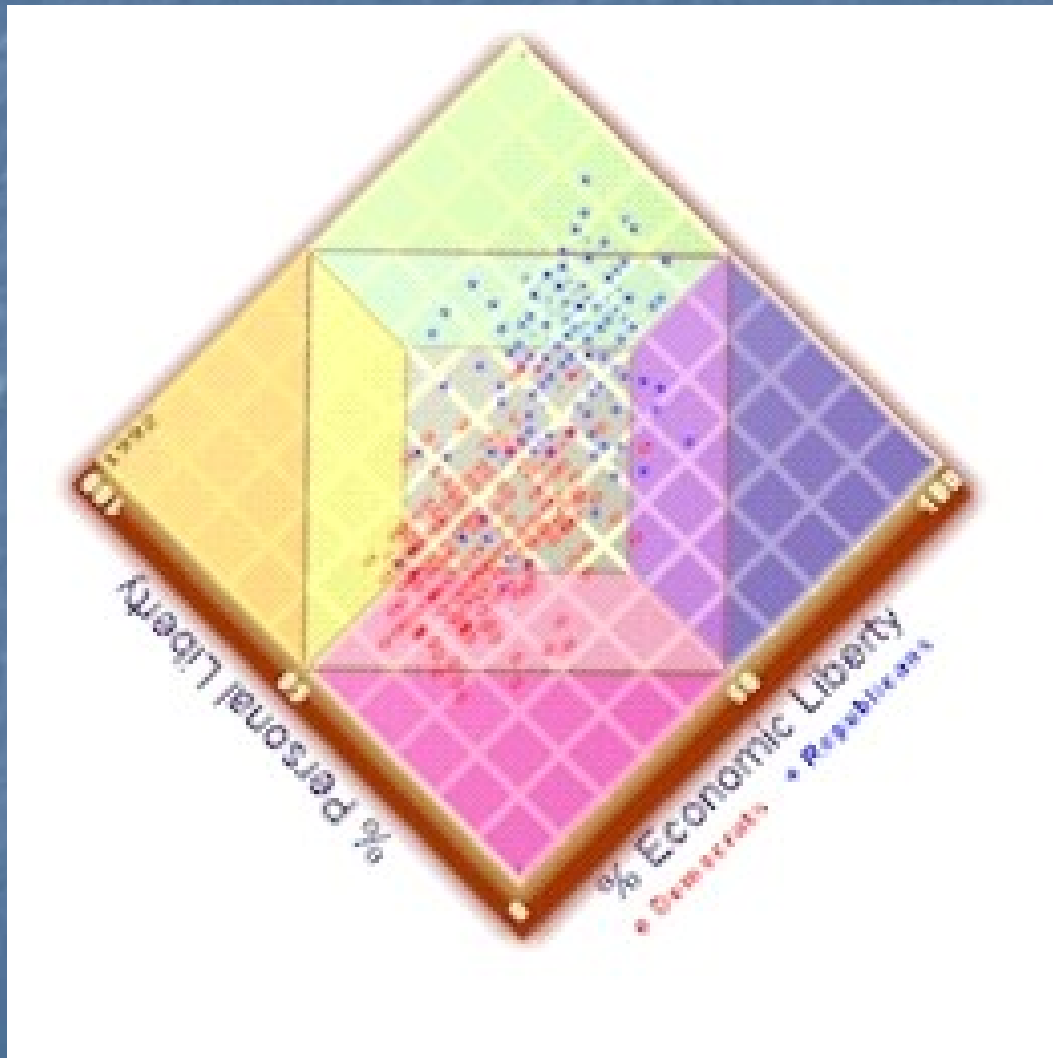
Some Personal Liberties votes in 2003 in the House of Representatives:

- 39. To prohibit human cloning. Passed 241 – 155 N
- 64. To cap Medical Malpractice awards. Passed 229 – 196 Y
- 88. To criminalize the depiction of child pornography. Passed 406 – 15 N
- 106. To decrease funding for counter-drug activities in Columbia. Rejected 209 – 216 Y

Some Economic Liberties votes in 2003 in the House of Representatives:

- 27. To increase mandatory child care funding. Rejected 124 – 300 N
- 72. Bankruptcy Overhaul – to expand access to Chapter 7 relative to the underlying bill. Rejected 128 – 296 N
- 79. Budget Resolution – to lower spending and increase the tax cut. 80 – 342 Y
- 80. Budget Resolution – to increase spending and eliminate the tax cut. 85 – 340 N

1992 Index



1992 Index (cont'd)

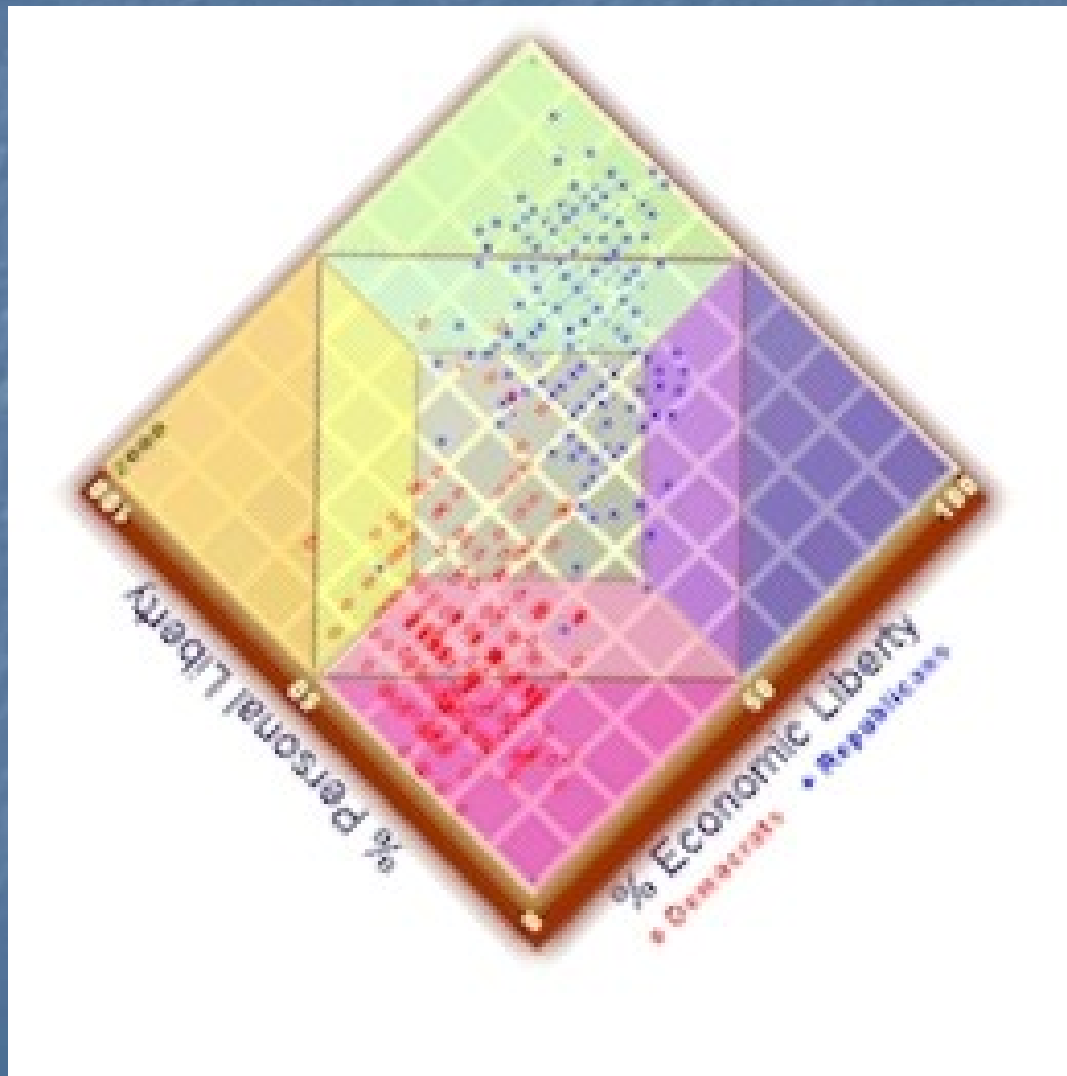
- Political Axis appeared to have partially shifted from left – right to up – down
- Republicans clearly better on Economic Liberties
- Republicans somewhat better on Personal Liberties

Revised Personal Liberties

Should you have the political right to:

1. Own and watch a pornographic video?
2. Have sexual relations with adults?
3. (Not wear a seatbelt?) Own a gun?
4. (Use unapproved medical treatments?)
Pray in school?
5. Consume marijuana?

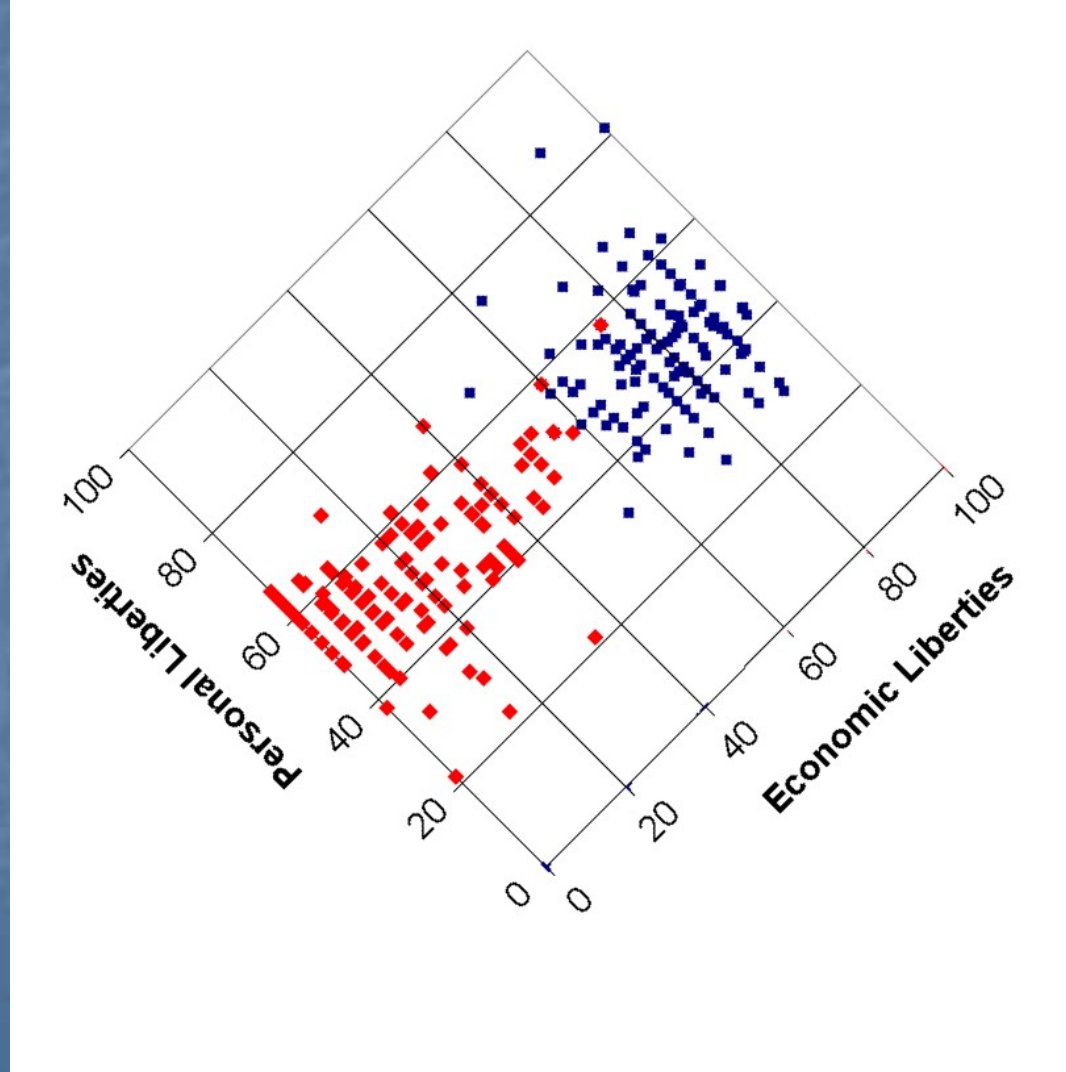
2001 Index



2001 Index (cont'd)

- Political Axis appeared to have almost completely shifted from left – right to up – down
- Republicans clearly better on both Economic and Personal Liberties
- Almost complete polarization – sparse middle and almost no overlap

2003 Index



2003 Index (cont'd)

- Political Axis dramatically shifted back to left – right
- Republicans still clearly better on Economic Liberties
- Democrats marginally better on Personal Liberties
- Only two clear Libertarians

Jeff Flake (R-AZ):
100 Economic
Liberties
81 Personal
Liberties



Ron Paul (R-TX):
89 Economic
Liberties
86 Personal
Liberties



Problem Votes for Republicans:

- **Roll Call Vote #106.** To decrease funding for counter-drug activities in Columbia. Rejected 209 – 216.
- Only 18 Republicans voted for this amendment,
- Whereas only 10 Democrats voted against it.

Problem Votes for Republicans:

- **Roll Call Vote #206.** To authorize the use of U.S. military to assist the Department of Homeland Security patrol the border. Adopted 250 – 179.
- Only 19 Republicans voted against,
- Whereas only 42 Democrats voted for it.

Problem Votes for Republicans:

- **Roll Call Vote #408.** To bar funds from being used for “sneak and peek” searches; i.e., to delay notice that a search warrant has been obtained. Adopted 309 – 118.
- Republicans split almost 50-50 on this amendment,
- Whereas only 4 Democrats voted against it.

Problem Votes for Republicans:

- **Roll Call Vote #409.** To bar funds to any state or local entity that restricts its officials from transmitting information regarding a person's citizen status or immigration status to the Department of Homeland Security. Rejected 122 – 305.
- Again, Republicans split almost 50-50 on this amendment,
- Whereas only 2 Democrats voted for it.

Problem Votes for Republicans:

- **Roll Call Vote #420.** To bar funds from being used to interfere with state laws regarding medical marijuana. Rejected 152 – 273.
- Only 15 Republicans voted for this amendment,
- Whereas two-thirds of Democrats voted for it.



- "I believe the very heart and soul of conservatism is libertarianism. I think conservatism is really a misnomer, just as liberalism is a misnomer for the liberals."

Ronald Reagan,
Reason Magazine, 1975.