

## Votes Based On Ideology Have Hurt New Hampshire

By Mary Anne Broshek

Before the last election, I wrote a letter giving reasons why I was voting for state Democrats.

I listed the amazing national rankings New Hampshire had received under the previous four years of a Democratic legislature and before that when we had a legislature of moderate Republicans and Democrats who worked together – no ideology, no promises to follow a pre-determined legislative agenda regardless of what is best for New Hampshire, and no pledges to ignore senior legislators, state agencies, and those testifying in opposition to the ideology.

The previous Democratic legislature obtained as much federal stimulus money as possible to provide jobs, help schools, and offset state dollars, so in 2010 we had the fourth lowest unemployment rate in the country, and minimum cuts were made to services. These were one-time funds.

In the world of politics, not only are the Democrats accused of increasing spending by 24% (22% of which was the stimulus money), but the current legislature claimed the loss of the one-time stimulus money as part of their budget cuts. See a sampling below of cuts, and remember: when you cut preventive services, you pay much more later to deal with the consequences.

- \$115 million cut from hospitals, forcing over 1,000 layoffs and an on-going lawsuit
- 50% cut to University of New Hampshire, resulting in layoffs and higher tuition
- Catastrophic illness program repealed
- Funds removed from two programs that helped keep seniors at home and out of nursing care.
- Closed over a thousand public assistance families who received SSI disability payments and terminated the program that helped two-parent families. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families is an employment-support program where people receive education and job training specific to New Hampshire employer needs, so they could get jobs that moved them off assistance. This change removed the state/federal assistance, ended employment supports, and put the responsibility to cover any basic needs on towns and cities using property tax dollars.
- All this while decreasing cigarette taxes (losing \$20+ million in revenue) and lowering things like the marriage license fee, which was used to provide mediation in divorces.

When there is no sales or income tax, the only other way to meet the needs of a growing population (especially in a recession) is to increase fees and surcharges. Whoever needs or causes the additional spending gets to pay an increased fee. This has been done for many decades.

One of the items fact-checked on Politifact ([TinyURL.com/d7vt7q4](http://TinyURL.com/d7vt7q4)) was an ad stating “New Hampshire Democrats \$1 Billion Deficit; New Hampshire Republicans Under Bill O’Brien Balanced Budget.” Politifact’s conclusion: “The Republican group’s sign is twisting the reality of the state budgets for partisan reasons and leaving people with a false impression. We rate it False.”

Now for a few comparisons of national rankings:

- Best managed state: 8th best in 2010, down to 13th best in 2012
- Unemployment rate (September): 4th lowest, down to 9th lowest
- Taxes (1 is highest): 50th, steady at 50th

The current legislature has voted based on ideology rather than the needs of New Hampshire citizens. The two candidates (Coffey and Youseff) endorsed by the Republican Liberty Caucus are not the Republicans of days past.

On a national level, the Republican Party vowed that their primary goal was to make Obama fail and become a one-term president. With all of the problems facing Americans, they put party before people.

The Republican Party *blocked* legislation to eliminate \$20 billion dollars in oil company subsidies; legislation to eliminate NASCAR subsidies while promoting cuts to low income families; legislation to increase jobs; and legislation to reward companies for bringing jobs back to the US, all while focusing on social issues that serve only to restrict freedom.

Even with Republican blocking in full force, the Obama administration was able to accomplish a lot. Go to [TinyURL.com/7xpxkqe](http://TinyURL.com/7xpxkqe) for a list of the top 50 things.

I will vote for Democrats to ensure a party that puts people first and a Congress that compromises for the good of the country rather than one whose hands are tied with pledges to Grover Norquist. 

## Free State Project Aims To Take Over New Hampshire

By Dean Barker

The Free State Project, an anti-government movement, was first proposed in 2001 by Jason Sorens, a professor from New York. From his manifesto:

“What I propose is a Free State Project, in which freedom-minded people of all stripes . . . establish residence in a small state and take over the state government. . . . Once we’ve taken over the state government, we can slash state and local budgets, which make up a sizeable proportion of the tax and regulatory burden we face every day.

“Furthermore, we can eliminate substantial federal interference by refusing to take highway funds and the strings attached to them. Once we’ve accomplished these things, we can bargain with the national government over reducing the role of the national government in our state. We can use the threat of secession as leverage to do this.”

A decade later, we can see the effects of the Free State Project on New Hampshire, the state the Free State Project chose to “take over.” A sizable number of Free State members are now in the ranks of the Republican statehouse supermajority, including two from our district.

One, Jennifer Coffey, is running for re-election this November. As a Google search makes clear, Representative Coffey has not tried to hide her affiliation with the Free State Project. For example, she believes America’s monetary system is “unconstitutional” and supports abolishing the federal income tax, the chief way in which America funds our military and our transportation infrastructure, among other things.

Rep. Coffey’s votes reflect her allegiance to Free State Project ideology. Most notably, she authored a bill that would have mandated signs along the Massachusetts border warning drivers that they were about to leave the state. The public’s rejection of this was swift and overwhelming.

Votes that achieved less notoriety but betray similar Free State Project values include repealing kindergarten; abolishing compulsory school attendance; allowing guns in the statehouse; defunding mental health, domestic violence, and the New Hampshire Healthy Kids programs; and cutting our public university system’s funding – already the least funded in the nation – by almost half. A more comprehensive list of how Rep. Coffey’s votes impacted New Hampshire can be found at [GraniteStateProgress.org/legislator/coffey](http://GraniteStateProgress.org/legislator/coffey).

Thanks to the recent redistricting, mainstream Republican voters of Andover, Salisbury, and Danbury are faced with a dilemma. No longer can they opt to vote for a slate of candidates to balance the ticket, as in the past; Representative Priscilla Lockwood, a common sense Republican, for example, is no longer part of our district.

We will now have one public servant (besides the flatorial district) representing us in the state house. As a result, a vote for a Republican here in Andover means a vote for the Free State Project and its goals. 

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