



2008 U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE SCORECARD

While education policy falls largely into the hands of state leaders to decide, the role of a U.S. Senator can be instrumental in advancing - or stopping reform in its tracks. Support for a program carries the federal imprimatur. Ironically, while most people eschew federal control they actually value the leadership which it implies.

When the Senate gets asked to vote on providing scholarship monies to poor children to attend a private school of their choice, or a charter school program or facilities support, the debate that ensues in Washington can push state leaders to do things they might normally fear will cause them the wrath of their national colleagues.

A speech by the president, his secretary of education or even a congressional colleague can confer “accepted” status on a reform that may have seen struggles. A few words may unlock the door to passage. That's the essence of the bully pulpit. In 1987, then Education Secretary Bill Bennett called Chicago schools the “worst in the country.” While he angered local and state leaders (some of who still talk about it), he set into motion a civic response that created needed reform, which continues to this day.

So as you refer the *U.S. Senate Education Scorecard* on the thirty-five pending races for office, we admit that we're taking sides, but not on a partisan level. Rather, we're taking sides for individuals who are willing to cast the votes that not only help children but may in fact advance some policies along in a state, even from Washington.

HOW REFORM-MINDED ARE THEY?

Assessing the reform prowess of a U.S. Senator is an exercise that requires counting up key votes by incumbents that suggest an interest in, or proclivity toward, reform. Interest in boosting charter schools can often - but not always -- be predicted by how one voted on a myriad of charter incentive programs that are part of education or other appropriations. Sometimes that vote may be a result of a variety of issues, but more often than not, a U.S. Senator willing to cast a vote for a bill that includes a choice program or funding for charters means they are positively predisposed.

For challengers, we've had to search their campaign literature, their comments in speeches or debates, and press coverage. Many of those running for U.S. Senate have voting records from state government. In each instance, we've been able to materialize at least one data point to provide us insights into how the challenger, if elected, might vote on important national education votes.

METHODOLOGY

The Scorecard was developed as follows:


D.C. School Choice - This 2003 vote was a watershed for school choice. While the program in question provided only a tiny amount of money in the big scheme of things for a program serving approximately 2,000 poor children from failing D.C. schools, the months long debate, negotiations and much controversy showed us where Senators were willing to stand on this important issue on a grand scale.

Charter School Incentive Funds - The Charter School Program (CSP) - is the major federal funding initiative which gives states money to provide start up grants to new charter schools. In addition, various incentive funds for facilities in the form of credit enhancement have been put to a vote, allowing for objective assessment of charter support.

NCLB - While many who once claimed to support the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) now argue that they would only do so if there were significant changes (e.g. More money, less federal power, etc.). However, the basic premise of ensuring strong accountability for how districts spend federal funds is a challenge to the status quo.

In some cases a vote for or against an issue may have been for unrelated reasons. We sought additional validation of support or opposition in determining scores for charters and NCLB, in particular.






Each of these three voting areas garners three possible points. Three is a clear up or down vote with no hesitation or strong support. Two is a “yes” vote but one that came under much duress. For non-incumbents, a two is moderate support. A one means the individual either abstained in a vote or offers only weak support. A zero means opposition or a clear “no” vote. Candidates whose positions still remained unclear after numerous attempts to contact them and detailed research on their coverage of the issues were also given a zero.

An individual who scores a 7-9 is a real reformer.  A score of 5-6 means the individual is a moderate supporter of some reform, but probably has little passion on the subject. A score of 4 and below - well, this individual is most likely a supporter of the status quo and anti-reform.







Jeanne Allen
President







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Candidates for U.S. Senate		Party	D.C. School Choice	Charter School Incentive Funds	NCLB	EdReform Score
Alabama						
	Jeff Sessions	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Vivian Davis Figures	Democrat	0	0	0	0
Alaska						
	Ted Stevens	Republican	3	2	3	8
	Mark Begich	Democrat	0	2	0	2
Arkansas						
	Mark Pryor	Democrat	3	3	2	8
	Unopposed					
Colorado						
	Mark Udall	Democrat	0	1	2	3
	Bob Schaffer	Republican	3	3	0	6
Delaware						
	Joe Biden	Democrat	0	3	1	4
	Christine O'Donnell	Republican	0	0	0	0
Georgia						
	Saxby Chambliss	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Jim Martin	Democrat	0	0	0	0
Idaho						
	Jim Risch	Republican	3	3	0	6
	Larry LaRocco	Democrat	0	0	0	0
Illinois						
	Dick Durbin	Democrat	2	3	1	6
	Steve Sauerberg	Republican	3	3	3	9







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Iowa						
	Tom Harkin	Democrat	1	3	1	5
	Christopher Reed	Republican	0	0	0	0
Kansas						
	Pat Roberts	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Jim Slattery	Democrat	0	2	0	2
Kentucky						
	Mitch McConnell	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Bruce Lunsford	Democrat	0	0	0	0
Louisiana						
	Mary Landrieu	Democrat	3	3	1	7
	John Kennedy	Republican	1	3	1	5
Maine						
	Susan Collins	Republican	2	2	2	6
	Tom Allen	Democrat	0	0	1	1
Massachusetts						
	John Kerry	Democrat	0	3	1	4
	Jeff Beatty	Republican	3	3	0	6
Michigan						
	Carl Levin	Democrat	0	3	0	3
	Jack Hoogendyk	Republican	3	3	0	6
Minnesota						
	Norm Coleman	Republican	3	3	2	8
	Al Franken	Democrat	0	0	0	0


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Mississippi						
	<i>Thad Cochran</i>	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Erik Fleming	Democrat	1	1	1	3
Mississippi Special Election						
	<i>Roger Wicker</i>	Republican	3	1	3	7
	Ronnie Musgrove	Democrat	0	0	1	1
Montana						
	<i>Max Baucus</i>	Democrat	0	3	2	5
	Bob Kelleher	Republican	3	2	2	7
Nebraska						
	Scott Kleeb	Democrat	0	0	0	0
	Mike Johanns	Republican	3	2	0	5
New Hampshire						
	<i>John Sununu</i>	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Jeanne Shaheen	Democrat	0	0	1	1
New Jersey						
	<i>Frank Lautenberg</i>	Democrat	0	2	1	3
	Dick Zimmer	Republican	3	3	3	9
New Mexico						
	Tom Udall	Democrat	0	0	1	1
	Steve Pearce	Republican	3	2	1	6
North Carolina						
	<i>Elizabeth Dole</i>	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Kay Hagan	Democrat	0	0	0	0

2008 U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE SCORECARD, *continued*

Oklahoma						
	<i>Jim Inhofe</i>	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Andrew Rice	Democrat	0	0	0	0
Oregon						
	<i>Gordon Smith</i>	Republican	3	2	3	8
	Jeff Merkley	Democrat	0	1	0	1
Rhode Island						
	<i>Jack Reed</i>	Democrat	0	3	3	6
	Robert Tingle	Republican	3	3	0	6
South Carolina						
	<i>Lindsey Graham</i>	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Bob Conley	Democrat	0	0	0	0
South Dakota						
	<i>Tim Johnson</i>	Democrat	0	3	1	4
	Joel Dykstra	Republican	1	1	3	5
Tennessee						
	<i>Lamar Alexander</i>	Republican	3	3	3	9
	Bob Tuke	Democrat	0	0	0	0
Texas						
	<i>John Cornyn</i>	Republican	3	3	1	7
	Rick Noriega	Democrat	0	0	0	0
Virginia						
	Mark Warner	Democrat	0	2	2	4
	Jim Gilmore	Republican	3	3	3	9

2008 U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE SCORECARD, *continued*

West Virginia						
	<i>Jay Rockefeller</i>	Democrat	0	2	2	4
	Jay Wolfe	Republican	3	3	0	6
Wyoming						
	 <i>Mike Enzi</i>	Republican	2	3	3	8
	Chris Rothfuss	Democrat	0	3	1	4
Wyoming Special Election						
	<i>John Barrasso</i>	Republican	0	0	0	0
	Nick Carter	Democrat	0	0	0	0

U.S. Senate Candidate Scorecard Key	
<i>Italics</i>	indicate incumbent.
	Score 7-9: Supports education reform fully.
	Score 5-6: Moderate to weak support.
	Score 4 and below: Most likely to defend status-quo and be anti-reform.