



Tennessee – CPAC Scorecard

Center for Legislative Analysis

11th Edition – 2024

Summary

The latest edition of the Tennessee CPAC Scorecard assesses 29 votes in both the Tennessee State Senate and House from the 2024 session. Tennessee Republicans earned an average conservative rating of 86% while Democrats averaged just 10% for an overall State Legislature average of 72%. These scores are similar to the Republican average, Democrat average and overall State Legislature average ratings from 2023 which were 87%, 8%, and 70% respectively.

Republican lawmakers, working with Governor Bill Lee, advanced a conservative agenda across a broad spectrum of policy areas. CPAC tracked more than two dozen bills that moved through the legislature this year, nearly all of which passed and were signed into law. The Tennessee General Assembly proved once again that, when leadership is aligned, state legislatures can be powerful engines of liberty, limited government, and constitutional principles.

Key Takeaways

Protecting Children and Parental Rights

Tennessee took strong action to protect children and uphold the rights of parents. The legislature passed **SB 1810**, which requires schools to notify parents if a student requests to be referred to by a different pronoun, thus ensuring that educators cannot secretly transition children behind their parents' backs. The legislature followed this by passing **SB 2782**, which criminalized the act of trafficking minors across state lines to receive radical gender surgeries without parental consent. These efforts culminated in the passage of **SB 2749**, a comprehensive Parents' Bill of Rights which guarantees that parents - not bureaucrats - retain the primary role in directing the upbringing and education of their children.

CPAC supported all three of these bills, which affirm the primacy of the family and push back on ideologically motivated policies that seek to sever the parent-child relationship. Lawmakers also passed **HB 2773**, the Cassie Wright Act, giving parents access to information about drugs prescribed to their children.

Defending the Second Amendment

Second Amendment rights were strengthened through several major pieces of legislation. **SB 2223**, the Second Amendment Financial Privacy Act, blocked banks from collecting or releasing information on firearm-related purchases, ensuring that financial institutions cannot act as de facto arms of the government in tracking lawful gun owners. In **SB 2763**, the state preempted all local attempts to implement red flag laws, thereby reinforcing Tennesseans' due process rights and preventing patchwork infringements on gun ownership.

Fighting DEI, Bureaucratic Bloat, and Globalist Influence

Conservatives in Tennessee moved decisively to rein in DEI ideology and excess bureaucracy. **SB 2610** blocked state-funded institutions from providing space or funds to organizations that promote divisive racial concepts or violent activism. Complementing this, **SB 2822** required state audits of universities to examine whether they are in compliance with equal protection provisions as part of a broader effort to restore neutrality and merit in higher education. CPAC supported both bills as important steps to remove political activism from public institutions.

In a significant bureaucratic reform, **SB 2503** eliminated the state's Human Rights Commission and transferred its duties to a newly created division within the Attorney General's office. CPAC has long advocated for such consolidations to improve oversight and eliminate redundancy. Lawmakers also passed **SB 2743**, requiring localities to certify they have not received grants from the United Nations that might infringe on private property rights. CPAC supported this as a necessary check against international encroachments on American sovereignty.

Highlighted Votes Analyzed

SB 1706 Banning the Outsize Influence of Election Officials in Tennessee.

This bill prohibits people, organizations, and political parties from providing training relating to the administration of an election without prior approval from the secretary of state. CPAC supports efforts to protect election security and supported this bill. The Senate passed this bill on March 28, 2024 by a vote of 27-4 (House 78-18) and the bill was signed into law.

SB 1971 Taking Down Abortion Traffickers in Tennessee.

This bill criminalizes the act of trafficking a minor to another state in order to conduct a wrongful abortion. CPAC believes abortion is always a human tragedy, opposes its practice, and supported this bill. The Senate passed this bill on April 24, 2024 by a vote of 25-4 (House 74-24) and the bill was signed into law.

SB 2078 Shoring Up Tennessee's TANF Programs.

This bill targets and implements penalties for certain abuses of the TANF system. CPAC supports efforts to crack down on welfare fraud and supported this bill. The House passed this bill on March 4, 2024 by a vote of 71-23 (Senate 26-6) and the bill later became law.

Trends and Observations

Most Red States Have Passed The Second Amendment Financial Privacy Act

The Left has used the financial industry as a weapon against the second amendment. Bank of America has closed the accounts of major gun manufacturing companies. Some banks have attempted to use a specific merchant category code (MCC) for firearms purchases with credit cards which would create a de facto registry of gun buyers. The Second Amendment Financial Privacy Act forbids financial institutions from using a category code that separates firearms from other sporting goods. So far 20 states, including Tennessee, have passed some version of the Second Amendment Financial Privacy Act. California passed a bill which did the exact opposite, and required vendors to use a firearms merchant code.

Tennessee Republicans Vote As A Block

Republicans maintained strong party discipline with nearly the entire caucus voting for Governor Bill Lee's agenda. As a result, the distribution of scores for 2024 was very tight, with nearly all Republicans scoring between 80% and 89%, which lines up closely with Bill Lee's 2024 conservative rating of 82.5%.

Some Infringement On The Free Market

The 2024 session produced strong conservative legislation on social issues. On economic issues the new legislation was a mixed bag. Despite some conservative victories, such as reform to the TANF system (SB 2078), Tennessee also passed an expensive mandate that requires health insurers to cover "mental health" treatments (SB 2801). Furthermore, Tennessee created industrial development corporations to give preferential treatment to minority-owned businesses and women-owned businesses (HB 351).

Conservative Excellence - Senate

Joey Hensley - 90%

Mark Pody - 90%

Kerry Roberts - 90%

Conservative Excellence - House

Jeremy Faison - 92%

John Holsclaw - 91%

Chris Todd - 93%

Ron Gant - 92%

Dan Howell - 92%

Conservative Achievement - Senate

Paul Bailey - 84%

Adam Lowe - 86%

Steve Southerland - 84%

Janice Bowling - 82%

Jon Lundberg - 89%

John Stevens - 86%

Richard Briggs - 85%

Becky Massey - 86%

Art Swann - 81%

Rusty Crowe - 86%

Randy McNally - 86%

Brent Taylor - 86%

Todd Gardenhire - 81%

Frank Niceley - 86%

Page Walley - 81%

Ferrell Haile - 86%

Bill Powers - 86%

Bo Watson - 86%

Ed Jackson - 86%

Shane Reeves - 86%

Dawn White - 86%

Jack Johnson - 86%

Paul Rose - 85%

Ken Yager - 86%

Conservative Achievement - House

Rebecca Alexander - 88%

Jody Barrett - 89%

Charlie Baum - 85%

Clark Boyd - 89%

Rush Bricken - 84%

Gino Bulso - 81%

Jeff Burkhart - 89%

Ed Butler - 88%

Kip Capley - 89%

Dale Carr - 89%

Michele Carringer - 88%

Scott Cepicky - 85%

Mark Cochran - 88%

John Crawford - 88%

Tandy Darby - 88%

Elaine Davis - 88%

Clay Doggett - 88%

Rick Eldridge - 89%

Andrew Farmer - 89%

Monty Fritts - 89%

Johnny Garrett - 88%

John Gillespie - 83%

Rusty Grills - 88%

Kirk Haston - 87%

David Hawk - 88%

Patsy Hazlewood - 88%

Esther Helton - 89%

Gary Hicks - 88%

Tim Hicks - 89%

Timothy Hill - 88%

Bud Hulsey - 88%

Chris Hurt - 88%

Curtis Johnson - 89%

Kelly Keisling - 84%

Sabi Kumar - 88%

Justin Lafferty - 88%

William Lamberth - 89%

Tom Leatherwood - 85%

Mary Littleton - 88%

Susan Lynn - 89%

Pat Marsh - 89%

Brock Martin - 88%

Greg Martin - 85%

Jake McCalmon - 89%

Debra Moody - 85%

Jerome Moon - 89%

Dennis Powers - 89%

John Ragan - 89%

Kevin D. Raper - 85%

Jay Reedy - 89%

Bryan Richey - 89%

Tim Rudd - 88%

Iris Rudder - 89%

Lowell Russell - 89%

Cameron Sexton - 85%

Paul Sherrell - 88%

William Slater - 89%

Mike Sparks - 89%

Robert Stevens - 89%

Bryan Terry - 88%

Kevin Vaughan - 87%

Greg Vital - 88%

Todd Warner - 85%

Mark White - 89%

Ryan Williams - 88%

Dave Wright - 89%

Jason Zachary - 89%