Millennial Action Project and Lugar Center Announce New Report on Bipartisanship among Younger House Members

Study shows that Future Caucus members and others under 45 years old are leaders in reaching across the aisle on legislation
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WASHINGTON, DC — Today, the Millennial Action Project (MAP) and the Lugar Center released a new report showing that current members of the House of Representatives who are under 45 years old cooperate on bipartisan legislation far more often on average than House members 45 and older. The new report is based on 2019 statistical data from the Bipartisan Index, an analytical tool launched in 2015 by the Lugar Center and the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University.

The study found that an impressive 56 percent of U.S. Representatives under 45 (at the beginning of the current Congress) were more bipartisan than the historical average, compared to just 40 percent of Representatives 45 and older. Members under 45 accounted for 29% of all House members with positive bipartisan index scores in 2019, despite holding only 17% of House seats. Members under 45 recorded a composite Bipartisan Index score of 0.13027. Those 45 and older averaged -0.04499. This is the third Congress in a row that under-45 House Members have outperformed their older counterparts by a wide margin.

The Bipartisan Index is based on an objective formula that quantifies how frequently Members of Congress co-sponsor a bill introduced by the opposite party and how often a Member's own bills attract co-sponsors from across the aisle. Current member’s scores are derived by comparing their performance to House scores compiled from 1993-2018. A positive score on the Index indicates that a Member has scored above the historical average. A negative score shows that a Member has been less bipartisan than the average member during the 26-year baseline period.

The study also found that members of the Millennial Action Project’s Future Caucus — made up primarily of under-45 House members, scored even better than the under-45 group as a whole. Future Caucus members had a composite Bipartisan Index score of 0.22689, with 59% scoring above the historical average.

“From the 113th to the 116th Congress, the Future Caucus has added more than 50 members in an effort to build political bridges and change the status quo, not deepen partisan divides and further
entrenchment,” said Steven Olikara, founder and CEO of the Millennial Action Project. “We’re proud of the work that Future Caucus members—and young members as a whole—have led in Congress, and this latest report from the Lugar Center shows that the next generation of leaders is already redefining how we govern.”

“The data from the Bipartisan Index on younger House Members is striking and has implications for the future of the legislative process,” said Dan Diller, Policy Director at the Lugar Center. “House members under 45 are embracing a bipartisan approach to legislation far more often than their older counterparts. This correlation is all the more impressive in that it has held true for three Congresses in a row and both younger Republicans and younger Democrats are scoring above the historical average.”

The study, which focuses solely on the House of Representatives, also breaks down Bipartisan Index scores by decade age cohorts. The public can compare the bipartisan performance of House members in their 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s and above. The full Lugar Center Bipartisan Index can be found by visiting thelugarcenter.org/ourwork-Bipartisan-Index.

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