



Virgil Goode: Constitution Party Candidate for President

While all of the mainstream press focuses upon the phony horse race between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney for president, many Americans may be surprised to find that they will have several choices on their ballots in November. One of those other choices is the Constitution Party candidate Virgil H. Goode, Jr. and his vice presidential running mate, attorney Jim Clymer.



[Labeled](#) “Mr. Independent” by his home newspaper in Virginia, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, former six-term Virginia Congressman Virgil Goode has demonstrated a willingness to change parties when his principles did not comport with his party. Goode was elected to the Virginia state Senate as a Democrat, and served his first two terms as a congressman as a Democrat. But he became a political independent in the year 2000, and was reelected twice as an independent before switching to the Republican Party. Goode may have a major impact on the final race, as the former Virginia congressman is currently [polling](#) at five percent in the Virginia presidential primary. Virginia is a key swing state in the presidential race, and support for Goode could tilt the outcome of the state in the race.

As a congressman for 12 years, Goode generally rated higher than most of his colleagues in *The New American's* “Freedom Index” (“Conservative Index” before 2007). Goode’s lowest scores in Congress were from his first and last terms.

Freedom Index/Conservative Index Ratings

- 105th Congress (1997-98): **60 percent** (party affiliation: Democrat)
- 106th Congress (1999-00): **76 percent** (party affiliation: Democrat/independent)
- 107th Congress (2001-02): **79 percent** (party affiliation: independent)
- 108th Congress (2003-04): **65 percent** (party affiliation: Republican)
- 109th Congress (2005-06): **72 percent** (party affiliation: Republican)
- 110th Congress (2007-08): **64 percent** (party affiliation: Republican)



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on June 19, 2012

Goode left Congress after narrowly losing a reelection bid in the 2008 Democratic landslide for Obama.

Fiscal Issues

On spending issues, Goode was better than most as a congressman, reliably voting to cut foreign aid and wasteful spending, and even voting against his own party's appropriations on some occasions. Goode strongly opposes multilateral free trade agreements as job killers, voting against CAFTA — the Central American Free Trade Agreement — ([roll call 443, 2005](#)) and calling for the end of NAFTA and the WTO. In such calls, he could be contrasted with the libertarian-leaning Rep. Ron Paul, who supports free trade but opposes the trade regimes as centralizing forces and threats to national sovereignty rather than as job-killers. Goode makes no claim to support free trade as an absolute good.

Social Issues

On social issues, Goode has a solid conservative record. He is pro-life on abortion, a solid supporter of the Second Amendment ([A+](#) rating from Gun Owners of America) and supports traditional marriage. "I've always supported the proposition that marriage should be between one man and one woman," he [said](#) in his April 21 acceptance speech for the Constitution Party presidential nomination.

Goode's social focus appears to be on immigration, making his candidacy a strong contrast to the establishment candidates Obama and Romney as well as Libertarian Party candidate Gary Johnson.

Goode has called for a partial repeal of the 14th Amendment, which guarantees citizenship to all persons born in the United States. He [told](#) Peter Gemma of the *Independent Political Report* that "The children of illegal aliens are now granted automatic citizenship. That's wrong and must be addressed right away. This is central to my opposition to granting amnesty for any and all illegal aliens. And I go a step further: legal immigration must be cut back too—Americans with talent and experience must be put to work first before we import foreign job takers." Goode is far more harsh than the two major party candidates on immigration, [calling for a moratorium](#) with few exceptions on even legal immigration for a period of time until the immigration issue can be solved.

Goode [stated](#) in his April 21 acceptance speech that "Last year, 1.2 million green cards were issued. A significant number were to working age individuals. When we have individuals that need work, you should not be bringing in so many from foreign nations to take jobs that our citizens have longed for and need."

Civil Liberty Issues

Goode's record is weakest on constitutional protections regarding civil liberties. As a congressman, Goode voted to allow warrantless searches ([roll call 502, 2006](#)) and for virtual civil immunity for telecommunications firms who provide private subscriber information to intelligence services ([roll call 437, 2008](#)). He also voted for military tribunals for terrorist suspects ([roll call 491, 2006](#)), tribunals that flatly contradict the Sixth Amendment requirement for a jury trial for all criminal suspects.

Goode says he has learned from his years in the private sector, noting in his acceptance speech at the April 21 Constitution Party national convention that one of the most important votes he made a mistake about was his vote in favor of the Patriot Act ([roll call 398, 2001](#)) and its reauthorization ([roll call 414, 2005](#)). "I made some mistakes in the house on votes," Goode said in his [acceptance speech](#), "and one in particular — several but one in particular: I voted for the Patriot Act. And most in this room are very much opposed to that measure. I want to say that my association with the Constitution Party over the



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last three plus years has given me a better perspective of analyzing legislation from a constitutional viewpoint. And I want to say that I made a mistake in voting for this measure.”

But in the [very next words](#), Goode demonstrated that his improved view of civil liberties had yet to be brought up to the level of actual constitutional understanding. His very next words were that he would seek the repeal of the Patriot Act only “as it applies to U.S. citizens in this country and to legal permanent residents. I do not favor, though this may not comport with all federal court decisions, extending constitutional rights to persons from foreign countries or those illegally in the United States.” Of course, the Constitution does not limit rights to U.S. citizens, nor can it. Rights are inalienable gifts from God. Moreover, the Bill of Rights makes no distinctions between citizens and immigrants — legal or illegal. The [Sixth Amendment](#) demands that a trial by jury is a right in “all criminal prosecutions.” It allows no exceptions.

Goode voted against Hate Crimes legislation ([roll call 469, 2005](#)) as a congressman. He claims to be for repealing the provisions of the NDAA (National Defense Authorization Act) that would purportedly allow the president to indefinitely detain U.S. citizens without trial (in direct contravention of the Sixth Amendment).

Foreign Policy

Goode favors a strong military that is substantially disengaged from unnecessary foreign wars, which is a change from his earlier vote for the Iraq War ([roll call 455, 2002](#)). He now [says](#), “I do not believe we should be involved in wars that have not been declared by Congress as specifically provided in the U.S. Constitution, so we must come home from Afghanistan. And I don’t think we can afford — nor is it strategically necessary — to have military bases all over the world. We owe too much money to underwrite the stationing of so many troops all around the world. Finally, I am against placing our armed forces under United Nations command.”

Goode is hoping to piggy-back on the burgeoning Ron Paul liberty movement, stressing that he was a member of Paul’s congressional Liberty Caucus while in Congress. “Ron Paul has been a friend from my first days in Congress. I learned a lot as a member of his Liberty Caucus in the House. I understand his interests in his son’s viability as a presidential candidate, but I’m always an optimist: I’d welcome Ron’s support,” Goode [told](#) the *Independent Political Report*’s Peter Gemma. “We should plan to face reality and capture the Ron Paul constituency on our own. Just look at the issues Ron has run on: audit the Fed, the gold standard, and a non-interventionist foreign policy. That’s our platform!”



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