**BURKHARD Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**“How Effective is Your Congressman?”**

**Background: For this project, you will be using a number of online resources to complete a table which indicates the influence of a member of Congress.**

**The Congress Members in Question: We will be researching all of the Congress members from the State of Colorado, as follows:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Congressperson | 6th Period | 7th Period |
| **Diana DeGette** | - | Roger |
| **Joe Neguse** | Liz | Nate, Jessica |
| **Scott Tipton** | - | Mireya |
|  |  |  |
| **Doug Lamborn** | - | Tristan |
| **Mike Coffman** | Alyssa | Gage |
| **Ed Perlmutter** | Tiffany | Omar |
| **Jason Crow** | Joshua | Isaac |
|  |  |  |

**The Websites:**

**CongressLink** ([http://www.congresslink.org](http://www.congresslink.org/index.htm)). CongressLink has the Congressional Information Center which provides links to every Congress member's office and Web site, information about leaders in Congress, and committee assignments and charters.

**AboutGovernment** ([http://www.aboutgovernment.org](http://www.aboutgovernment.org/)). This site provides links to more than 250 Web sites about the federal government, including a great many about the U.S. Congress. Teachers may want to limit the number or pre-select the most useful ones.

**Federal Election Commission** (<http://www.fec.gov/>) where you can search for the status of a Congress member's campaign fund.

**Votesmart.org** ([http://www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org/)) Good overall site to see the status of representatives voting records, finances, etc.

**The Congressional Power Index**

***HOW TO USE THIS TABLE***: To get a rough approximation of a Congress member's influence, use the table below to compile a rating. The higher the number, the more influential the member. You may not be able to determine the measurement factor in all cases, but the index can be useful even if only partially completed.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FACTOR** | **INDEX** |
| 1. Is of the majority party in the chamber.  *If "yes," rates a 3. If member is of the minority party, rates a -3*. *If Independent, score a 0.* | -3 0 3 |
| 2. Holds formal elected party leadership post in the House or Senate.  *Speaker of the House and Majority Leader of the Senate = 5 Minority Leader, Assistant Majority Leader = 4 Majority Whip, Assistant Minority Leader, Minority Whip = 3 Assistant Whips, Republican or Democratic Conference Chair = 2 Rep./Dem. Conference Secretary, Rep/Dem Policy Chair = 1* | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Chairs (or is ranking member of) a "money" committee. *Committee chair rates a 5, ranking member a 3. House "money" committees: Appropriations, Budget, and Ways and Means Senate "money" committees: Appropriations and Finance* | 0 3 5 |
| 4. Chairs (or is ranking member of) another committee. *Chair rates a 4, ranking member a 2.* | 0 2 4 |
| 5. Chairs (or is ranking member) a subcommittee. *Chair rates a 3, ranking member a 1.* | 0 1 3 |
| 6. Is a member of one of the following committees (rates a 3 for each) *House: Appropriations, Armed Services, Energy and Commerce, Rules, or Ways and Means Senate: Appropriations, Armed Services, Budget, Finance, Judiciary* | 0 3 6 |
| 7. Seniority. (Measured in times elected to Congress) *1 election victory rates a 0, then score 1 for each election won up afterwards- 2 wins rates a 1, six wins rates a 5, etc.* | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Margin of victory in last election.  *Greater than 60 percent is highest rank at 3 59-60 rates a 2 56-58 rates a 1 53-55 rates a 0 50-52 rates a -1 less than 50 percent rates a -2* | -2 -1 0 1 2 3 |
| 9. Amount of campaign funds on hand. *Amounts depend on individual situation, such as competitiveness of the district. Lacking such information,  less than $100,000 = -5 $100,000 - $199,999 = -4 $200,000 - $299,999 rates -3 $300,00 - $399,999 rates -2 $400,000 - $499,999 rates -1 $500,000 - $599,999 rates 0 $600,000 - $699,999 rates 1 $700,000 - $799,999 rates 2 $800,000 - $899,999 rates 3 $900,000 - $999,999 rates 4 $1,000,000 and over rates 5* | -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Exposure in national press. *Washington Post Online Search for one week (1 point for every 4 hits with 5 points the maximum)* | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

**Questions:**

* Who was your Congress member and what is your Congress member’s score on the influence table above? How does this compare to the numbers of some of the other Congress members being researched? What do you feel this means regarding the influence that your Congress Member has in the House of Representatives?
* How might you measure the quality of a Congress member's constituent service? Does high quality constituent service give a member more power or influence in Congress? Why?
* What other ways exist to measure a member's influence on legislation, in addition to committee service and leadership position?