A Framework for Congressional Decision-Making

Guiding Philosophy

For the United States Congress

Our goal is to solve the world's biggest problems.

I What are the world's most important problems?

10×
If a problem **affects 10× more people**, it's **10× more important** to work on.

10×
If a problem **causes 10× more harm**, it's **10× more important** to work on.

10×
If a problem **is 10× more likely to happen**, it's **10× more important** to work on.

10×
If a problem **is 10× easier to solve**, it's **10× more important** to work on.

The Priority Formula

Priority = *Scale* × *Severity* × *Probability* × *Tractability*

The higher the score, the more important it is to act — regardless of party.

II Some of the World's Biggest Problems

Catastrophic AI Risk — CRITICAL

20–40% chance of global catastrophe on par with nuclear war from AI by 2027–2033

The expert consensus is there's roughly a 20–40% chance of global catastrophe on par with nuclear war from AI by 2027–2033. The fact this affects everyone on earth makes it one of the world's most important problems.

Factory Farming — URGENT

120–210B animals alive in factory farms right now

We estimate there are 120–210 billion animals alive in factory farms right now. This makes factory farming one of the world's most important problems.

Global Poverty — URGENT

4.3 Billion people — 52% of the world — living on less than $10/day (PPP)

52% of the world lives on less than $10 USD in PPP per day. That's more than 4.3 billion people. This makes global poverty one of the world's most important problems.

III How to Decide Whether to Support a Bill

✓ Obviously Do It

- ✓ If the bill can help solve one of the world's biggest problems and has little to no downside, you should obviously do it.
- ✓ If a bill has some probability of solving a problem and doesn't cause people real harm, then even if it doesn't fully solve the problem and even if it has some key flaws, it still does good — you should obviously do it.
- ✓ Ask yourself: even if this bill has flaws, will it make anyone's life actually worse, either now or in the future? If the answer is no, you should obviously do it.
- ✓ If the reason you don't want to support a bill that's obviously good is it would lose private interest groups money, just add an amendment that directly gives those groups money roughly equal to what the bill would cost them. This way they don't actually lose any money, and all the good things in the bill can still happen.

When You're Uncertain

If an idea has a much bigger positive impact than the negative impact, you should obviously do it.

If an idea can solve the world's biggest problems, and the downsides are much smaller in scale, you should obviously do it.

Make a pros/cons list of the idea. If you can figure out a way to get the major benefits of the idea without the cons, do that. If you can figure out a way to get the major benefits of the idea while eliminating most of the cons, do that.

If there's no way to get the major benefits without the major downsides, it's a bit harder.

If a solution to a big problem also has some cost, but [Impact of the big problem] × [What % of the problem gets solved] × [Probability of the solution succeeding] is bigger than [Impact of the cost of the solution on people, animals, and future generations], then the positive impact is bigger than the negative impact, and you should obviously do it!

In other words, if a proposal helps 10× more people, animals, and future generations than it harms, helps them 10× more than it harms the people experiencing the side-effects, and the pros are 10× more likely to actually happen than the cons, then the positive impact is a whole 10× bigger than the negative impact, and you should obviously do it! If not, you should obviously not do it.

Ask yourself: Does this bill help more people in the real world than it hurts?

✗ Obviously Don't Do It

- ✗ If a bill only makes people's lives, animals' lives, or future generations' lives worse, you should obviously not do it.
- ✗ If the bill stops something that helps solve problems and doesn't actually do anything good, you should obviously not do it.
- ✗ Ask yourself: will this bill make anyone's life better, either now or in the future? If the answer is no, you should obviously not do it.
- ✗ Put yourself in the shoes of someone directly affected by this bill. Are you glad the bill passed? If the answer is no, you should obviously not do it.
- ✗ Seriously ask yourself: is this bill obviously bad? If the answer is yes, you should obviously not do it.

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project-flourishing.base44.app

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Feedback & Collaborati
wesreisen2@gmail.com

If you disagree with anything on this poster, please let me know by emailing wesreisen2@gmail.com, and I'll edit the poster. That way, you'll never have any disagreements with the poster.