

# THE CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE LAWMAKING



**2019 to 2020 ANNUAL REPORT**



# Center for Effective Lawmaking

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# OUR VISION

**We envision a Congress comprised of effective lawmakers, strong institutional capacity, and the incentive structure needed to address America's greatest public policy challenges.**

The Center for Effective Lawmaking (CEL), established in 2017, is an organization that promotes lawmaking effectiveness in legislatures across the U.S. through research and engagement. The Center is currently focused on the U.S. Congress, but work is underway to expand to U.S. state legislatures. We conduct research on individual lawmakers and the lawmaking process, cultivate a community of scholars with expertise and interest in legislative effectiveness, create tools for media and the public to understand lawmaking effectiveness in Congress, disseminate our research and analysis, and engage with current lawmakers and their staffs in connecting our research to their efforts to create and implement their legislative agendas.

The CEL is a joint partnership between the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy at the University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University. It was created to advance the generation, communication, and use of new knowledge about the effectiveness of individual lawmakers and legislative institutions in Congress.

The Center grew out of the scholarship of the Legislative Effectiveness Project, as featured in the award-winning book *Legislative Effectiveness in the United States Congress: The Lawmakers*, written by CEL Co-Directors Craig Volden and Alan Wiseman.

# OUR MISSION

**We advance the generation, communication, and use of new knowledge about the effectiveness of individual lawmakers and U.S. legislative institutions.**

# FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

We hope the 2020 edition of the Center for Effective Lawmaking Annual Report finds you and your loved ones happy and healthy, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the numerous difficulties our country is facing.

The third year of operations for the CEL was initially designed as one in which we pivoted many of our activities – from mainly building our capacity for insightful research over our first two years, to putting our engagement activities on an equal footing. Given the challenges of the pandemic, however, we placed some of those engagement activities – such as in-person meetings and events – on hold; and we doubled down on the generation of new knowledge.

Notably, we have now completed our development of Interest and Legislative Effectiveness Scores across twenty different policy areas for the U.S. Congress, stretching back to the 1970s. We have also completed State Legislative Effectiveness Scores for members of 97 legislative chambers across the states over the past two decades. Both of these new datasets provide immense new opportunities for research on the effectiveness of individual lawmakers and U.S. legislative institutions, directly contributing to the CEL mission.

At a time when so many people around the world are feeling so distant from one another, we could not be more thankful for the close community of those who continue to work with us to advance the Center’s work. We thank our student interns and researchers, who have been more productive than ever, often working from home. We thank our doctoral and post-doctoral scholars, who are beginning their careers with a focus on effective lawmaking. We thank our faculty affiliates, which have recently grown to two dozen scholars across the country. Together, these researchers do the work needed to undergird the informed discussions that lead to better lawmaking.

We are also thankful for the generous support of those who fund our work. We appreciate the ongoing support of the Batten School at UVA and of Vanderbilt University. We are tremendously grateful that, despite all of the challenges of the pandemic, both the Hewlett Foundation and the Democracy Fund have reaffirmed their support of the Center with new multi-year grants. Thanks also to With Honor for their new contribution to the CEL, and to the individual donors whose support has allowed us to take on some exciting new initiatives.

We are also thankful for the many partners that continue to work with us to spread the word about effective lawmaking, and to make sure our work gets into the right hands. We are excited to explore new opportunities with such organizations as the Congressional Management Foundation, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress.

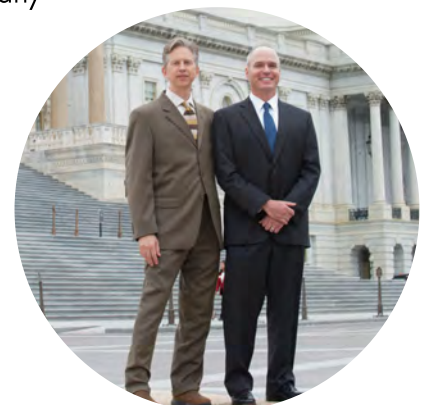
The coming year will be filled with continued challenges, but also with tremendous new opportunities. We look forward to working with you to meet these challenges head-on. Among so many others, we’re excited for the inaugural meeting of the CEL Advisory Board this fall, for the release of our new Legislative Effectiveness Scores in the winter, and for the return of our CEL Research Conference in the spring.



Craig Volden  
University of Virginia



Alan E. Wiseman  
Vanderbilt University



# KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

The Center for Effective Lawmaking's research team has developed three areas of focus for our research activities:

**identification** of the characteristics of those who would likely become effective lawmakers once elected;

**cultivation** of effective lawmakers and institutional structures within Congress; and

**accountability** of legislators for their lawmaking effectiveness.

Within these areas, we have been continuing our work advancing numerous research projects, detailed in the list of publications and current research activities below. We are proud to have a diverse roster of faculty and student affiliates working on CEL projects. To help advance this research agenda, we continue to actively promote the work of CEL affiliates and CEL small grant award winners.

**CEL Co-Directors Professors Volden and Wiseman were the recipients of the Award for Collaborative Excellence in Public Service at the University of Virginia for 2019-2020.**

Throughout the 2019-20 Academic Year, we have continued to grow scholarly interest in the research of the Center through broad dissemination of our data on our website and to individual researchers, as well as through planned presentations at top academic research conferences (American Political Science Association, Southern Political Science Association, State Politics and Policy Conference – canceled due to pandemic, Midwest Political Science Association – canceled due to pandemic, European Political Science Association – canceled due to pandemic), and in academic departments and other venues.

We are pleased to report that the American Political Science Association conference for 2019 featured multiple panels of papers explicitly dedicated to the study of legislative effectiveness for the first time, many of which were led by CEL faculty affiliates.

# SMALL GRANT PROGRAM

In September 2019, the Center awarded five research grants for a total of \$9,000 during Fiscal Year 2020. Research from these awards covered a variety of topics in the legislative effectiveness field such as “Measuring the Quality of Legislative Oversight” and “The Effect of Experience on Institutional Influence and Congressional Capacity,” among others.



Zac McGee, University of Texas at Austin  
CEL Small Grant Recipient 2019-2020



The grant provided by the Center for Effective Lawmaking was extremely useful for advancing our project. As proposed, we spent about a week in Washington, D.C. in January and conducted 18 interviews with current and former members of Congress, congressional staffers, and staffers at interest groups who sponsor privately-funded trips (i.e., the topic of our project). Our current working paper is 20 pages long and its theory is derived mainly from our findings from our trip sponsored by CEL. It is our intention to submit this paper for publication to a major journal by the end of summer. Thank you again for helping to fund this research project. Philip [Moniz] and I do not doubt that we will write at least one additional paper on this topic.

\$9,000 grant funding awarded by the CEL

1 post-doctoral researcher

1 graduate associate

22 faculty affiliates

38 active research projects

8 research assistants

# RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Center for Effective Lawmaking continues to pursue vital research on the topic of legislative effectiveness. This year we were able to employ eight research assistants and one post-doctoral affiliate as well as utilize the knowledge and expertise of our impressive group of faculty affiliates.



Benjamin Feldman,  
CEL Graduate Research Assistant, 2019-2020



As a Graduate Research Assistant at the CEL, I have had an inside look at the variety of different topics with which the Center is consistently engaged. It has been interesting to see where these research questions originate and how the Center goes about answering them in a scholarly and quantitative manner, as well as how its findings apply to today's Congress.

My contributions span from data collection to coding on projects ranging from finding articles in local newspaper archives covering state legislatures to coding Senators' and Representatives' occupations before their elections. The work is worthwhile because it helps answer important questions about how to make our Democracy more effective, and even to ask some questions of my own.

In September 2019, the CEL presented a memo to the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress in the U.S. House of Representatives suggesting reforms to congressional procedures and processes based on our research.

**To:** The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress  
**From:** Alan E. Wiseman, Co-Director, Center for Effective Lawmaking, Vanderbilt University; Craig Volden, Co-Director, Center for Effective Lawmaking, University of Virginia  
**Reform:** Staff Recruitment, Retention, Compensation and Benefits; Chair Term Limits

Members of Congress are being asked to do more with less. They seek to allocate their scarce staff resources carefully given their multiple, and sometimes competing, objectives. New members remain vulnerable to spending their freshmen year mired in the business of simply navigating their new environments. Committee chairs, once powerhouses of institutional knowledge and reform, have been disempowered and left to navigate complex policy issues without specialized staff. Moreover, the legislative staff with the most valuable experience are not remaining in Congress but are departing for more lucrative job opportunities.

Legislators do not generally benefit from large legislative staffs but, rather, from having and retaining individual staffers with high levels of experience. A targeted strategy to help retain the most experienced staff in Congress will pay the greatest dividends in regards to lawmaking.

While the 3rd Annual Research Conference on Effective Lawmaking, to be held at Vanderbilt University with Former Senator Bill Frist (R-TN) as a keynote speaker, was canceled due to COVID-19 safety recommendations, our research efforts continued apace. The dedication of our faculty affiliates as well as research assistants and associates was evident and projects continued in the face of an altered work environment for all. We look forward to reinstating our Conference in the summer of 2021, and in the meantime advance new and inventive ways to build engagement around our work.

The CEL has polished its presentation on "The 5 Habits of Highly Effective Lawmakers," and continues to share our research findings related to that topic with much success and, upon request, are creating a robust and in-depth guide formulated from our research for new members of Congress.



Carlos Algara  
University of Texas at El Paso

The Center for Effective Lawmaking began its faculty affiliate program in Summer 2018. As of May 2020, we now have twenty-two faculty affiliates, located at eighteen colleges, universities, and think tanks across the United States.



Kris Miller  
University of Maryland

This Academic Year we were pleased to add four new faculty affiliates to the CEL team.



Claire Abernathy  
Stockton University

Our faculty affiliate program continues to strengthen and build community as well as encourage the sharing of data and information among scholars in the legislative effectiveness arena.



Justin Kirkland  
University of Virginia

## RESEARCH RELEASED 2019-2020

Identification: Exploring the extent to which effective lawmaking in state legislatures translates into effective lawmaking in Congress.

Coauthors: Peter Bucchianeri (CEL post-doctoral scholar), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Currently entitled "**Moving on Up: How Effective State Legislators Become Effective Lawmakers in Congress.**" This paper was presented at the American Political Science Association Conference in August of 2019, the Southern Political Science Association Conference in January 2020, and the University of Texas-Austin Department of Government, January 2020.



Identification: Exploring the degree to which educational backgrounds establish the skills and networks that enhance lawmaking effectiveness.

Coauthors: Craig Volden, Jonathan Wai, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Current working paper entitled, "**Elite Education and Legislative Behavior in the U.S. Congress.**"

Identification: Exploring the degree to which combat veterans become effective lawmakers in Congress.

Author: Richard E. Hagner (Lt. Col. U.S. Army, and Vanderbilt University Ph.D. Graduate).

Current working paper entitled, "**Legislative Effectiveness of Veterans in the U.S. House of Representatives: The Increased Effectiveness of a New Post-9/11 Cohort.**"

Cultivation: Examination of the extent to which legislative staff experience influences the lawmaking effectiveness of members of Congress.

Coauthors: Jesse M. Crosson, Geoffrey M. Lorenz (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Currently a working paper entitled "**How Experienced Legislative Staff Contribute to Effective Lawmaking,**" to be published in *Congress Overwhelmed: The Decline of Congressional Capacity and the Prospects for Reform*, University of Chicago Press, in 2020.

Identification and Cultivation: Exploration of the role of gender equity in the production of legislation, with an empirical examination focused on congressional staff.

Coauthors: Melinda Ritchie and Hye Young You (CEL faculty affiliate), CEL grant recipients.

Current working paper entitled "**Women's Advancement in Politics: Evidence from Congressional Staff.**"

Cultivation: Exploring the roles of party leadership and ideological positions in advancing legislative proposals in the U.S. Senate.

Coauthors: Craig Volden and Alan E. Wiseman.

Entitled "**Party, Ideology, and Legislative Effectiveness in the U.S. Senate**" to be published in Lawrence C. Dodd, C. Lawrence Evans, and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds., *Congress Reconsidered, Twelfth Edition*, in 2020.

Cultivation and Accountability: Exploring media coverage of effective lawmakers in Congress.

Coauthors: Kelsey Shoub (CEL post-doctoral scholar), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Currently entitled "**The Distorted Image and Voice of Congress: Show Horses vs. Work Horses,**" presented at the Southern Political Science Association Conference in January 2020.

Accountability: Study of the extent to which constituents are aware of (and care about) the lawmaking effectiveness of their representatives in the U.S. House.

Coauthors: Daniel M. Butler, Adam G. Hughes, Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Current working paper, entitled "**Do Constituents Know (or Care) about the Lawmaking Effectiveness of their Representatives?**"

Accountability: Exploration of the extent to which primary voters and potential primary challengers base their decisions on the effectiveness of lawmakers in Congress.

Coauthors: Danielle Thomsen (CEL faculty affiliate), Sarah Treul (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Current working paper, entitled "**Turning Legislative Effectiveness into Electoral Success.**"

# CURRENT RESEARCH

Identification: Exploring the extent to which candidates reveal characteristics during their early electoral campaigns that can be used to identify them as future effective or ineffective lawmakers once elected.

Coauthors: Craig Volden, Alan E. Wiseman, and still recruiting others.

Currently entitled "**Campaigning to Be an Effective Lawmaker.**"

Identification and Cultivation: Exploring how prior experiences relevant to lawmaking help cultivate skills of effective lawmakers.

Author: Sarah Treul (CEL faculty affiliate and CEL grant recipient).

Currently entitled "**The Effect of Experience on Institutional Influence and Congressional Capacity.**"

Identification and Cultivation: Exploring which policy areas lawmakers focus their attention on, to be responsive to constituents, to take advantage of resources from staff, committees, and interest groups, and to learn from past successes.

Coauthors: Geoffrey Lorenz (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, Alan E. Wiseman, and Hye Young You (CEL faculty affiliate).

Currently entitled "**Lawmaking Portfolios.**"

Identification and Cultivation: Examination and scoring of the extent to which legislators in Congress value the quality of legislation in solving public policy problems in addition to the ideological positions of such proposals.

Coauthors: Craig Volden, Alan Wiseman, and still recruiting others.

Currently entitled "**Who Cares about Quality Proposals in Congress?**"

Identification and Accountability: Study of the backgrounds and representative styles of lawmakers.

Coauthors: Andrew Clarke (CEL faculty affiliate) and Daniel Markovits (CEL grant recipients).

Currently entitled "**Home Style and Legislative Effectiveness in the U.S. Congress.**"

Cultivation: Study of the role and capacity of congressional staff in conducting dual oversight and lawmaking activities.

Coauthors: Jennifer Selin and Hanna Brant (CEL grant recipients).

Currently entitled "**Brain Drain? Understanding Congressional Staffers' Legislative and Oversight Capabilities.**"

Cultivation: Examination of the extent to which bipartisan lawmakers are more effective in Congress.  
Coauthors: Laurel Harbridge Yong (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.  
Currently entitled "**Are Bipartisan Lawmakers More Effective?**" to be revised and submitted for publication in 2020.

Cultivation: Study of how lobbyists and lawmakers interact in forming coalitions that facilitate bill passage.  
Author: Geoffrey M. Lorenz (CEL faculty affiliate and CEL grant recipient).  
Currently entitled "**Lobbying Coalitions, Legislative Entrepreneurship, and Effective Lawmaking**" with research in progress.

Cultivation: Examination of the activities that newly elected members of Congress can engage in to become effective lawmakers in their initial years in office.  
Coauthors: Craig Volden and Alan E. Wiseman.  
Currently entitled "**How to Become an Effective Lawmaker from Day 1,**" with research in progress, and preliminary results presented to freshman members of the 116th U.S. House of Representatives.

Cultivation: Examination of the extent to which effective lawmakers are able to keep their original proposals intact through the lawmaking process or whether their openness to modifications in language makes them more effective.  
Coauthors: Kelsey Shoub (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.  
Currently entitled "**Surviving the Lawmaking Process Intact,**" with research in progress.

Cultivation: Exploring whether those with more concentrated policy portfolios are more effective than those with more diffuse or diverse policy portfolios.  
Coauthors: Craig Volden, Alan E. Wiseman, and still recruiting others.  
Currently entitled "**Hedgehogs or Foxes?**" with research work in progress.

Cultivation: Observational and case-study-based research project on the formation of foreign policy options within congressional committees over time.  
Author: Gerry Warburg (CEL faculty affiliate and CEL grant recipient).  
Working paper entitled "**How Congress Shapes Foreign Policy Options: 1975-2020 and Beyond**" currently under review for publication.

Cultivation: Exploration of how the ideological position of legislative proposals affects their viability and likelihood of becoming law.  
Coauthors: Jesse M. Crosson (CEL grant recipient), Alexander C. Furnas, and Geoffrey M. Lorenz (CEL faculty affiliate).  
Entitled "**Estimating Interest Group Ideal Points Using Public Position-Taking Data**" to be published in *American Political Science Review* in 2020.

Cultivation: Exploration of the relative effectiveness of state legislators and how institutional structures influence their abilities to advance legislation.  
Coauthors: Peter Bucchianeri (CEL post-doctoral scholar), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.  
Currently entitled "**Legislative Effectiveness in U.S. State Legislatures,**" with research work in progress.

Cultivation: Exploration of the procedures and conditions that lead to the obstruction of legislative proposals in the U.S. state legislatures.

Coauthors: Craig Volden, Harrison Weeks, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Currently entitled "**Obstruction in U.S. State Legislatures**," with research work in progress.

Cultivation: Exploring how personal networks of lawmakers influence their legislative behavior.

Coauthors: James Curry (CEL grant recipient) and Jason Roberts (CEL faculty affiliate and CEL grant recipient).

Currently entitled "**Personal Relationships and Legislative Effectiveness in Congress**" with research in progress.

Cultivation: Exploring the relationship between congressional oversight and lawmaking effectiveness in Congress.

Author: Kenneth Lowande (CEL grant recipient).

Currently entitled "**Measuring the Quality of Legislative Oversight**" with research in progress.

Cultivation and Accountability: Exploring whether major laws put forth by effective lawmakers have greater longevity than those advanced by others.

Coauthors: Charles R. Shipan, Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Currently entitled "**Lawmaking Effectiveness and Policy Longevity**" with research work in progress.

Cultivation and Accountability: Exploring the informational lawmaking benefits and potential accountability issues involved in members of Congress accepting gift travel from non-governmental sources.

Coauthors: Zachary McGee and Philip Moniz (CEL grant recipients).

Currently entitled "**Gift Travel in the U.S. House of Representatives**" with research in progress.

Accountability: Exploration of the extent to which primary voters and potential primary challengers base their decisions on the effectiveness of lawmakers in Congress.

Author: Jennifer Lucas (CEL grant recipient).

Currently entitled "**Congressional National Television Media Strategies: Motivations and Effectiveness**" with research in progress.

Accountability: Examination of how voters hold U.S. Senators accountable for their lawmaking effectiveness.

Coauthors: Craig Volden, Alan E. Wiseman, and still recruiting others.

Currently entitled "**How Voters Hold U.S. Senators Accountable for their Lawmaking Effectiveness**," with research work in progress.

Accountability: Examination of the extent to which effective lawmakers can generate more in campaign contributions.

Coauthors: Geoffrey Lorenz (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, Alan E. Wiseman, and Hye Young You (CEL faculty affiliate).

Currently entitled "**Do Campaign Contributions Follow Legislative Effectiveness?**" with research work in progress.

# PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

Identification and Cultivation: Examination of who the effective lawmakers are in the U.S. Senate and what helps them advance their legislation.

Coauthors: Craig Volden and Alan E. Wiseman.

Published as "**Legislative Effectiveness in the U.S. Senate**" in *Journal of Politics* in 2018.

Identification and Cultivation: Examination of how the selection processes and institutional positions of party leaders in Congress influence their lawmaking effectiveness.

Author: Alan Wiseman.

Published as "**Filters and Pegs in Holes: How Selection Mechanisms and Institutional Positions Shape (Perceptions of) Political Leadership**," in *Leadership in American Politics*, University Press of Kansas, 2017.

Cultivation: Theory of how ideology and effectiveness influence the legislation passed through Congress.

Coauthors: Matthew Hitt, Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Published as "**Spatial Models of Legislative Effectiveness**" in *American Journal of Political Science* in 2017.

Cultivation: Examination of how women's issues bills (particularly with female sponsors) progress through Congress.

Coauthors: Craig Volden, Alan E. Wiseman, and Dana E. Wittmer.

Published as "**Women's Issues and their Fates in the U.S. Congress**" in *Political Science Research and Methods* in 2018. Winner of the 2019 award for the best article in the European Political Science Association's flagship journal.

Cultivation: Survey of congressional staff to explore their work environment, capacity to do their jobs, and role in effective lawmaking.

Coauthors: Timothy LaPira (CEL faculty affiliate) and Alexander Furnas (CEL grant recipients). Survey entitled "**2019 Congressional Capacity Survey**" was conducted in 2019. Data are being used in various active research projects.

Cultivation: Examination of whether participation in ideological caucuses in Congress enhances or undermines the effectiveness of members.

Coauthors: Andrew J. Clarke (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Current working paper, entitled "**The Legislative Effectiveness of Party Faction Members in Congress**" currently under review for publication.

Cultivation: Examination of the extent to which lawmakers who lose their committee positions due to changes in the majority party or number of seats on a particular committee subsequently become less effective.

Coauthors: Darrian Stacy (CEL Graduate Student Affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman.

Current working paper, entitled "**The Importance of Committee Assignments for Legislative Effectiveness**," presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference in April of 2019, being revised for future publication.

# RESEARCH TEAM



Peter Bucchianeri,  
CEL Post-Doctoral Fellow, 2018-2020



My postdoctoral fellowship with the Center for Effective Lawmaking at Vanderbilt University has been an extremely rewarding experience, both personally and professionally. CEL Co-Directors Alan Wiseman and Craig Volden were -- and continue to be -- incredibly supportive of my work and I have appreciated their advice and guidance over the past two years.

During the course of my fellowship, my primary research focus was to create the CEL's state legislative effectiveness scores, which currently cover 49 U.S. states and date back to the late 1980s at the earliest. At present, we are finalizing two projects that use these new scores. The first project introduces the scores, analyzes how a lawmaker's background and institutional positions in the legislature impact their effectiveness, and compares how those relationships vary across the states. The second project analyzes the transition from state to federal office, demonstrating that highly effective state legislators who are elected to Congress from more professional state legislatures are more effective than members who either did not serve at the state level or served in less professional contexts.

Beyond my work on CEL projects, I have also been fortunate to use my time with the center to complete and revise papers from my dissertation. Most notably, this includes a project on party competition in municipal government, which was just recently published at the *American Political Science Review*.

As I move forward in my career, I am excited about the opportunity to continue to engage with the CEL and I look forward to seeing how scholars use the state legislative effectiveness scores that I contributed to during my time with the Center.

The Center for Effective Lawmaking is currently on schedule for publishing legislative effectiveness scores in 20 issues areas constructed for each Congress from the early 1970s to the present.

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



Vanessa Revilla, CEL Intern 2019-2020



I had a very positive experience working as an intern for the Center for Effective Lawmaking. As a student interested in politics and policymaking, this internship allowed me to see and critically think about political research from a new lens. The CEL's work is fascinating and very timely, and I frequently found myself discussing the research with classmates and peers. I also appreciate that I was able to take initiative on projects that interested me, including putting together an event on the legislative effectiveness of women in congress. Overall, this was a very valuable internship experience, and I would highly recommend it.



Sarah Robinson



Vanessa Revilla



Julia Newman



John Norcross



Sherese Bonner



Bridget Rizzo



Benjamin Feldman

The Center for Effective Lawmaking had three interns for the fall semester and one work/study student. Additionally, to meet a demand for internship experiences to replace those canceled by COVID-19, the CEL hosted three interns for a virtual summer internship program, as well.

These students were actively engaged in various projects such as interviewing and sharing new research from our faculty affiliates, event marketing, and increasing student awareness and engagement. They have enjoyed the opportunity to work directly with prominent academics and practitioners in the legislative field.

# EVENTS 2019- 2020

## SIGNATURE EVENTS

We conducted numerous formal and informal presentations to various audiences throughout the 2019-20 time period. Highlights included:



In September, the Center hosted visiting scholar Kira Sanbonmatsu from Rutgers University at Vanderbilt. Around 50 students, professors, and community members attended as Prof. Sanbonmatsu discussed research regarding the role and impact of women in Congress.

In November, Josh Kraushaar, politics editor at the *National Journal*, spoke to students and community members at the University of Virginia. Mr. Kraushaar spoke on the primary election season and election environment, perceived effectiveness of Congress, the role of the media, and more.



In December, former congresswoman Barbara Comstock (R-VA) visited the University of Virginia to engage in student luncheons, a public talk, and a women in policy event to discuss effective legislating.

In March, we hosted *New York Times* journalist Jamelle Bouie at the University of Virginia for a discussion about primary elections and what to watch on Super Tuesday. Mr. Bouie fielded questions from a very engaged crowd on a variety of topics.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In September, the Center presented and facilitated a conversation at the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership's Emerging Leaders program surrounding the five habits of highly effective lawmakers, which was very well received.

In September, Co-Director Wiseman delivered a keynote address to the European Consortium of Political Research Standing Group on Parliaments entitled "Assessing Legislative Effectiveness in the United States Congress and American State Legislatures" at the University of Konstanz in Konstanz, Germany.



In October, the Center accompanied Master of Public Policy Students at UVA to Washington, D.C., where we met with members of the Virginia delegation of Congress, as led by CEL Acting Co-Director and faculty affiliate Gerry Warburg. During this visit, the CEL's work was shared with interested parties.

In October, Co-Director Volden presented the Center's work and research to UVA alumni in Tokyo, Japan.

In October, Co-Director Wiseman presented the Center's work and research to Vanderbilt alumni at an alumni reunion event in Nashville, TN.

In February, Co-Directors Volden and Wiseman presented and facilitated a conversation for the Brookings Institution's LEGIS fellows program surrounding the five habits of highly effective lawmakers.

# ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

Our engagements efforts moved online in March 2020 in accordance with COVID-19 safety recommendations. Our virtual offerings included:

We recorded, created and offered a short-course on our research and scores.

Additionally, we created podcasts on our research, background, effectiveness scores, and a few interviews.

On May 1, we hosted a community discussion online surrounding our work on women in the legislature.

On May 14, we presented, in conjunction with the Miller Center for Public Affairs, a panel discussion on primaries and primary reform.

On June 12, we hosted Senator Tim Kaine's (D-VA) Chief of Staff, Mike Henry, for an online discussion on the role of experienced Congressional staff in effective lawmaking.

On July 22, Professors Wiseman and Volden were the featured speakers for Batten's Chat with an Expert series. During this online presentation, the Co-Directors shared the history of the Center alongside why and how they developed the Legislative Effectiveness Scores.



Student lunch with  
Congresswoman Barbara Comstock



Presentation to  
Brookings Institution's LEGIS Fellows



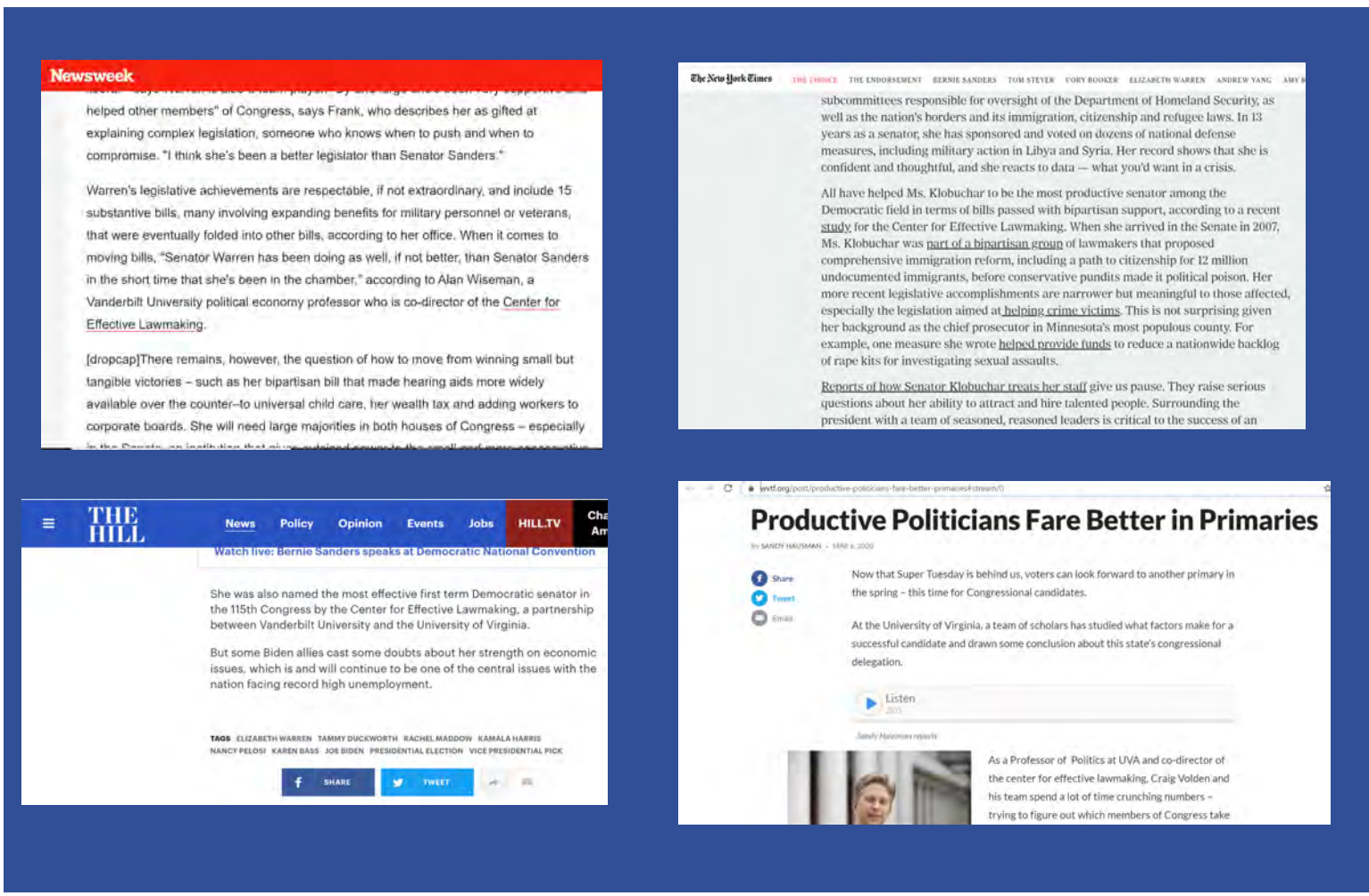
Event with Jamelle Bouie in the Great Hall  
of Garrett Hall at the University of Virginia

# USE OF KNOWLEDGE

During the 2019-2020 year, the Center met with reporters and bloggers from *The Hill*, *National Journal*, American Enterprise Institute, Brookings Institution, and *The Atlantic*. We hosted *National Journal* politics editor Josh Kraushaar at UVA. We have created a press release template and comprehensive marketing strategy for the release of new research, and used these materials in conjunction with our most recent CEL Working Paper contributions.

During the 2019-2020 year, our research was featured in LegBranch.org, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, NPR, and many local outlets. (For highlights from CEL media coverage, please visit [thelawmakers.org/media](http://thelawmakers.org/media)).

Since January 2020, there have been nearly 40 direct quotes of and references to our Legislative Effectiveness Scores, including national and local media outlets.



We continue to publish one to two blog posts a month on a variety of topics within the field of legislative effectiveness research, and our "Find Your Representative" web page remains popular. Since January 2020, the number of users to our website has increased by 64.1% and the number of sessions has increased by 66%.

# RESOURCES

Thanks to the generous financial support by the U.S. Democracy Program of the Hewlett Foundation and The Democracy Fund, today the Center is strong.

Additionally, the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy as well as Vanderbilt University continue to support the work of the Center in meaningful ways.

The CEL was also a proud recipient of a Bankard Fund award for future conference hosting as well as a gift from With Honor to continue the important work of legislative effectiveness research.

The Center has continued to cultivate a donor base and to make requests for gifts both large and small as it continues to accept investment from engaged citizens.

**To support the Center for Effective Lawmaking,  
contact Allison Carter (Operations Director) at  
[thelawmakers@virginia.edu](mailto:thelawmakers@virginia.edu) or (434) 924-7064.**

Additionally, the CEL has developed powerful partnerships that allow for growth in exciting ways. We have ongoing conversations with the Congressional Management Foundation, the Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, the Committee on House Administration, National Conference of State Legislatures, Former Members of Congress, the Center for Politics, and the Miller Center for Public Affairs among many others.



FRANK BATTEN SCHOOL  
*of LEADERSHIP and PUBLIC POLICY*



# OUR FUTURE

The past year of the Center's work has been invigorating and exciting. We have seen growth and recognition and it has been demonstrated time and again that the public is clamoring for the type of nonpartisan analysis and research we do. We remain rooted in our belief that the topics we engage with are useful not only to today's Congress and legislative processes, but also to the future trajectory of our democracy.

As we look to the future, and as we seek to grow the footprint and relevance of the work we do, we have identified our primary strategic objectives for the 2020-2021 Academic Year.

It is our intention to continue to pursue these objectives in new and unique ways to our full abilities, mindful of the current environment of a nation reeling, and recovering, from a pandemic. Yet we know that the work we do is even more important given the state of affairs and that "the search for effective lawmakers is perhaps as crucial as it has ever been. It is at times when institutions are failing that effective leaders are needed more than ever." (Volden & Wiseman, 2014, p. 13)

## CONTINUING OBJECTIVES

- Host informative and dynamic speakers, academics and former/current lawmakers
- Support our faculty affiliates
- Administer a third round of small grants
- Cultivate the next generation of scholars through our post-doctoral, research assistant and intern programs
- Bring awareness, through media outlets, to the general public regarding Legislative Effectiveness Scores, and research findings that can help build a better Congress

## GROWTH OBJECTIVES

- Engage our inaugural Board of Advisors
- Finalize our strategic plan for 2020-2023
- Advance our research and preparation of state legislative effectiveness scores
- Release issue-specific Legislative Effectiveness Scores
- Offer advice for becoming effective lawmakers to new members of the 117th Congress

**There are a variety of unique opportunities to engage with and support the Center for Effective Lawmaking.**

**Contact Allison Carter at [thelawmaker@virginia.edu](mailto:thelawmaker@virginia.edu) or (434) 924-7064 to learn more.**

