THE CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE LAWMAKING
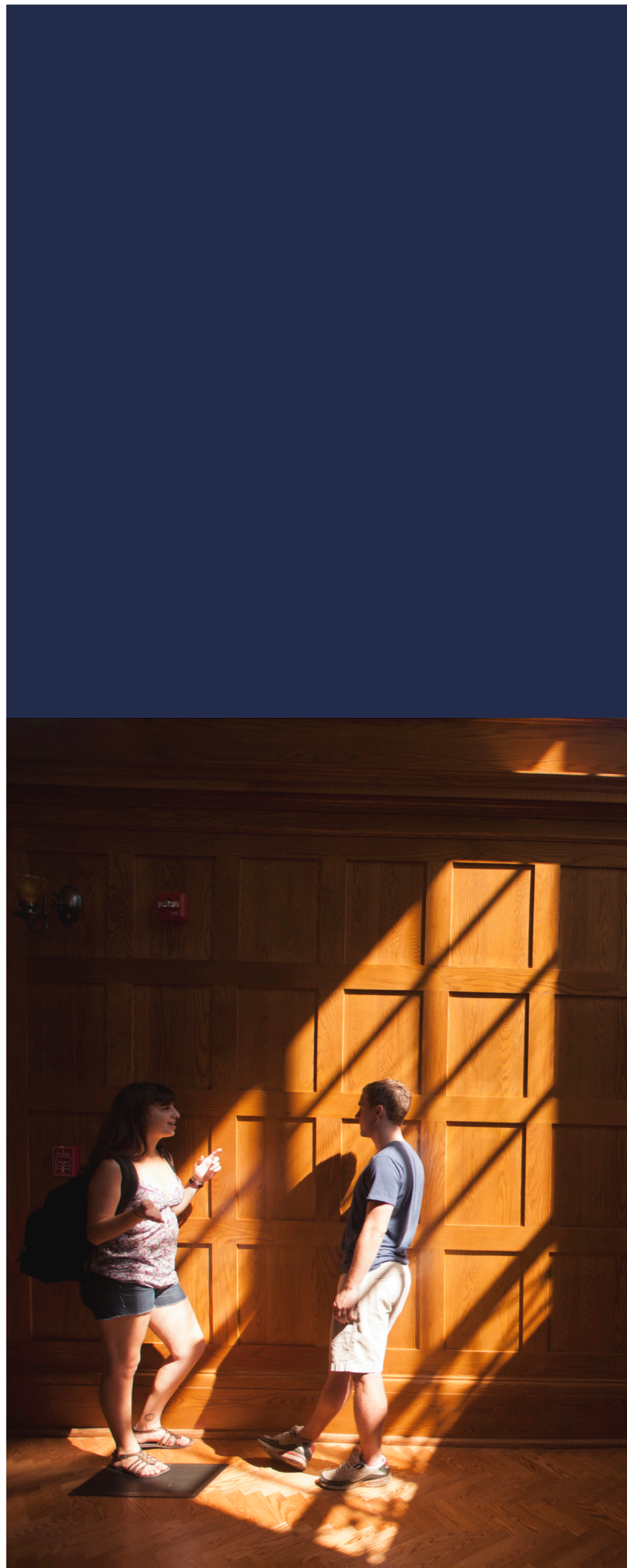
2024 Annual Report

VISION

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

MISSION

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

Center for
Effective
Lawmaking

VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY

UVA BATTEN

LETTER FROM CO-DIRECTORS

We are once again thankful and humbled to be leading the Center for Effective Lawmaking through a year of terrific successes.

Our work on effective lawmaking in the American state legislatures has been taking hold and rapidly expanding. As evidenced by cutting-edge papers and prominent public discussions, numerous scholars and practitioners are excited to be focusing on effective lawmaking in the states. Enhanced by a new grant from the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, the CEL is poised to regularly update our State Legislative Effectiveness Scores, make those scores broadly accessible and useful, build discussions around effective lawmaking across media groups within the states, partner with organizations and lawmakers to promote more effective state legislatures, and cultivate a diverse and dynamic community of scholars in this area.

We envision expanding many of our signature congressional engagement programs to the states. Even still, we continue to update our congressional New Member Guide (soon to be shared with every newly elected legislator), regularly hold briefings and Office Hours sessions with congressional staff, work with reformers to build a better Congress, and refine our methodology to better capture effective lawmaking in our updated Legislative Effectiveness Scores.

Undergirding all of the engagement work and advice we offer are the evidence-based research findings from our team of faculty affiliates, doctoral and post-doctoral scholars, and student research assistants. Across the pages here, you can read about their many successes and the new projects they are undertaking.

We remain deeply grateful to the individuals and organizations who help advance these initiatives through giving of their time and financial support. We believe that effective governing institutions are essential to preserving and advancing American democracy, and we appreciate those who share our vision and who work to make it a reality.

All the very best,

Craig Volden and Alan WIseman,

CEL Co-Directors

New Legislative Effectiveness Scores

We have begun to put in place all of the necessary processes for the production of Legislative Effectiveness Scores for the 118th Congress. This includes working with our computer programmer consultants, as well as internal planning for media coverage and congressional outreach. We anticipate the new scores will be released in late February or early March of 2025, soon after the end of the Congress in January.

State Legislative Effectiveness Scores

Our State Legislative Effectiveness Scores capture state legislators' activities over recent decades in state legislative chambers. Our initial research paper based on these scores won the American Political Science Association SPPQ Award for best paper on state politics and policy presented in 2020. The revised version of this manuscript is forthcoming as a publication in the flagship journal for political science (*American Political Science Review*). We have made these scores available on our website, where they have been widely downloaded for use by scholars across the country. We are working toward regularly updating all scores at the end of each legislative term.

Knowledge Generation: By the Numbers

7
grants
awarded

5
post-doctoral researchers
and graduate affiliates

11
works
published

44
active research
projects

34
faculty affiliates at 26
institutions

11
research
assistants

SMALL GRANT PROGRAM

This year, the CEL awarded seven research grants for a total of $11,218 to scholars across the country. Research from these awards covered a variety of important topics in the legislative effectiveness field such as state lawmaking ("Prior Experience and State Legislative Effectiveness"), electoral connections ("Campaigning on Compromise" and "Congressional Campaign Strategy and Bipartisan Tendencies"), coalition building ("Enabling Compromise" and "Ask and You May Receive: Earmark Requests and Allocations in the 117th and 118th Congresses"), collaboration ("Personal Relationships and Legislative Effectiveness in the U.S. Congress"), and effective lawmaking around the world ("Beyond #NotTooYoungToRun: Legislative Effectiveness of Young Legislators in Nigeria").

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 the analysis of institutional structures within Congress and state legislatures that contribute to effective lawmaking; and **accountability** of legislators for their lawmaking effectiveness.

RESEARCH RELEASED

Bucchianeri, Peter (CEL research affiliate), Craig Volden (CEL Director), and Alan E. Wiseman (CEL Director). 2024. "Legislative Effectiveness in the American States." *American Political Science Review*.

Clarke, Andrew J. (CEL faculty affiliate) and Daniel Markovits (CEL grant recipient). 2024. "Congressional Town Halls." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.

Clarke, Andrew J. (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden (CEL Director), and Alan E. Wiseman (CEL Director). 2024. "The Conditional Lawmaking Benefits of Party Faction Membership in Congress." *Political Research Quarterly*.

Fong, Christian (CEL faculty affiliate), Kenneth Lowande (CEL grant recipient), and Adam Rauh. 2024. "Expertise Acquisition in Congress." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Hunt, Charles R. (CEL grant recipient), and Kristina C. Miler (CEL faculty affiliate). 2024. "How Modern Lawmakers Advertise their Legislative Effectiveness to Constituents." *Journal of Politics*.

Lewallen, Jonathan (CEL grant recipient). 2024. "Views on the Hill: Disagreement and Effectiveness in U.S. Senate Agenda Setting." *Politics & Policy*.

Lollis, Jacob M. (CEL grant recipient). 2024. "Are Workers Effective Lawmakers?" *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*.

Reynolds, Molly E. (CEL faculty affiliate). 2024. "Unorthodox Legislating in Trump's Senate." In *Disruption? The Senate during the Trump Era,* ed. Sean M. Theriault (CEL faculty affiliate). New York: Oxford University Press.

Ritchie, Melinda N. (CEL grant recipient). 2023. *Backdoor Lobbying: Evading Obstacles in the U.S. Congress*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Volden, Craig (CEL Director), and Alan Wiseman (CEL Director). 2024. "The Surprisingly Effective Lawmaking of Minority-Party Democrats in the Senate during the Trump Era." In *Disruption? The Senate during the Trump Era*, ed. Sean M. Theriault (CEL faculty affiliate). New York: Oxford University Press.

You, Hye Young (CEL faculty affiliate). 2023. "Dynamic Lobbying: Evidence from Foreign Lobbying in the U.S. Congress." *Economics & Politics*.

In coordination with our Sixth Annual Research Conference, we announced the 2024 Award for Best Publication on Effective Lawmaking. The award was presented to Pamela Ban (UC San Diego), Ju Yeon "Julia" Park (The Ohio State University), and Hye Young You (Princeton University) for their article in the *American Political Science Review,* "How are Politicians Informed? Witnesses and Information Provision in Congress." In this article, the authors provide readers with a valuable granular picture of who is called to present before committees, when they are invited to appear, and the nature of their testimony. The authors also advance several important findings that speak directly to scholarly and practitioner debates over the internal organization of Congress, and how Congress seeks to acquire information as part of the lawmaking process.

Pamela Ban
UC San Diego

Ju Yeon (Julia) Park
The Ohio State University

Hye Young You
Princeton University

RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Center for Effective Lawmaking has continued to move significant research forward in the three main areas of identification, cultivation and accountability with a diverse and growing group of scholars. The CEL has expanded our research to also explore each of these three main research areas in regards to lawmaking effectiveness in U.S. state legislatures.

Current works in progress in these areas that are coauthored by Center Co- Directors Craig Volden and Alan Wiseman, CEL affiliates, and/or CEL small grant award winners, include the following:

1. Identification: Exploring the degree to which educational backgrounds establish the skills and networks that enhance lawmaking effectiveness, with differences across political parties. Coauthors: Craig Volden, Jonathan Wai, and Alan Wiseman. Working paper entitled, "On the Decline in Elite-Educated Republicans in Congress," currently under review for publication.

2. 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: Mackenzie Dobson (CEL graduate student affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan Wiseman. Currently entitled "Outcome Consequential Campaigning," currently under review for publication.

3. Identification: Study of the relationship between redistricting and effective lawmaking. Author: Geoffrey M. Lorenz (CEL faculty affiliate and CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Drawing Better Lawmakers: Redistricting Institutions and Legislative Entrepreneurship," with research in progress.

4. Identification: Study of the relationship between legislator wealth and lawmaking effectiveness in the United States Congress. Author: Darrian Stacy (CEL faculty affiliate). Currently entitled "Wealth and Policymaking in the U.S. House of Representatives." Currently being revised as part of a broader book-length project.

5. 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" with research in progress.

6. 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), Amy Meli (CEL post-doctoral scholar), Craig Volden, and Alan Wiseman. Currently entitled "Lawmaking Portfolios" with research in progress.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

7. 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?" with research in progress.

8. Identification and Cultivation: Exploring what factors contribute to and detract from effective lawmaking in the U.S. House and Senate over the past 14 years, in comparison to an earlier, less polarized, era (1973-2008). Coauthors: Craig Volden and Alan E. Wiseman, entitled "Reconsidering Lawmaking Effectiveness in a Changing Congress," forthcoming as a chapter in *Congress Reconsidered, 13th Edition*, by CQ/Sage Press (to be published 2025).

9. Identification and Cultivation: Exploring what personal and/or institutional factors contribute to a legislator's ability to advance their sponsored bills through the lawmaking process as standalone measures, and/or by successfully attaching them to other measures that become law. Coauthors: Mary Kroeger (CEL faculty affiliate), Erinn Lauterbach (CEL faculty affiliate), Kelsey Shoub (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman, entitled "Effective Lawmaking Behind the Scenes," presented at the 2024 Annual Meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association Meetings, and being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

10. Identification and Accountability: Exploring how congressional campaign statements relate to subsequent bipartisan tendencies among lawmakers. Author: Emily Ommundsen (CEL faculty affiliate and grant recipient). Currently entitled "Congressional Campaign Strategy and Bipartisan Tendencies," with research work in progress.

11. 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" with research in progress.

12. Cultivation: Exploring the relationship between ideology and lawmaking effectiveness in the Republican and Democratic parties in the U.S. House and Senate. Coauthors: Patrick W. Buhr, Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman, entitled "Polarization and Lawmaking Effectiveness in the United States Congress," presented at the 2023 Annual Meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association and being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

13. 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 faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman. Current working paper, entitled "The Importance of Committee Assignments for Legislative Effectiveness," being revised for future submission to a peer-reviewed journal.
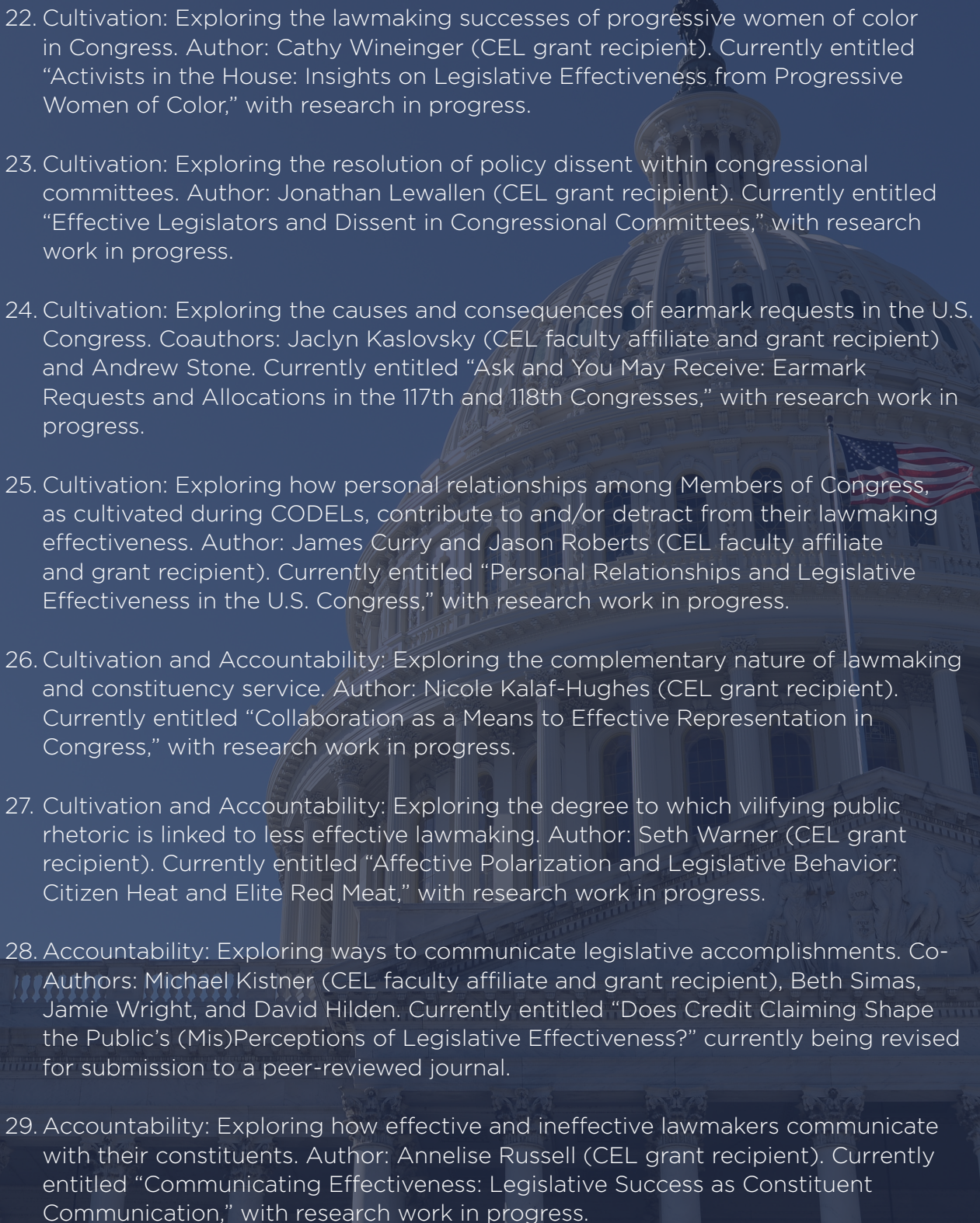
RESEARCH PROJECTS

14. Cultivation: Exploring whether those with more concentrated policy portfolios are more effective lawmakers than those with more diffuse or diverse policy portfolios. Coauthors: Craig Volden and Alan E. Wiseman. Entitled "Foxes vs. Hedgehogs: Issue Specialization and Effective Lawmaking in the U.S. Congress," currently being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

15. 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.

16. Cultivation: Exploring the degree to which Congress and the President work together to advance policy proposals. Coauthors: Samuel Kernell, Roger Larocca, Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman. Currently entitled "Unification of Powers: When Effective Lawmakers Sponsor Presidential Proposals in Congress," presented at the 2022 European Political Science Association conference, being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

17. Cultivation: Exploring the conditions under which specifically worded legislation or vaguer ideas lead to coalition formation and legislative advancement in Congress. Coauthors: Erinn Lauterbach (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman. Currently entitled "Policy Specificity and Effective Lawmaking," presented at the 2022 European Political Science Association conference, being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

18. Cultivation: Exploring the changing nature of political pluralism. Co-Authors: Geoff Lorenz (CEL grant recipient and faculty affiliate), Jesse Crosson (CEL faculty affiliate), and Zander Furnas. Currently entitled "Polarizing Pluralism: Party Competition, Interest Group Strategy, and the Resurgent Mischiefs of Faction," with research work in progress.

19. Cultivation: Exploring the role of amendments within committees as part of effective lawmaking. Coauthors: Nicholas Howard and Mark Owens (CEL grant recipients). Currently entitled "Committees as a Venue for Effectiveness," with research in progress.

20. Cultivation: Exploring how cities represented by effective lawmakers can rely on them instead of their own lobbying efforts. Author: Fred Gui (CEL grant recipient and post-doctoral researcher). Currently entitled "City Lobbying and Member's Legislative Performance," with research work in progress.

21. Cultivation: Exploring how intraparty groups are formed and sustained in Congress. Author: Gabe Foy-Sutherland (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "'I Vote My District': The Electoral and Legislative Value of Intraparty Organization in the U.S. House," with research work in progress.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

22. Cultivation: Exploring the lawmaking successes of progressive women of color in Congress. Author: Cathy Wineinger (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Activists in the House: Insights on Legislative Effectiveness from Progressive Women of Color," with research in progress.

23. Cultivation: Exploring the resolution of policy dissent within congressional committees. Author: Jonathan Lewallen (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Effective Legislators and Dissent in Congressional Committees," with research work in progress.

24. Cultivation: Exploring the causes and consequences of earmark requests in the U.S. Congress. Coauthors: Jaclyn Kaslovsky (CEL faculty affiliate and grant recipient) and Andrew Stone. Currently entitled "Ask and You May Receive: Earmark Requests and Allocations in the 117th and 118th Congresses," with research work in progress.

25. Cultivation: Exploring how personal relationships among Members of Congress, as cultivated during CODELs, contribute to and/or detract from their lawmaking effectiveness. Author: James Curry and Jason Roberts (CEL faculty affiliate and grant recipient). Currently entitled "Personal Relationships and Legislative Effectiveness in the U.S. Congress," with research work in progress.

26. Cultivation and Accountability: Exploring the complementary nature of lawmaking and constituency service. Author: Nicole Kalaf-Hughes (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Collaboration as a Means to Effective Representation in Congress," with research work in progress.

27. Cultivation and Accountability: Exploring the degree to which vilifying public rhetoric is linked to less effective lawmaking. Author: Seth Warner (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Affective Polarization and Legislative Behavior: Citizen Heat and Elite Red Meat," with research work in progress.

28. Accountability: Exploring ways to communicate legislative accomplishments. Co-Authors: Michael Kistner (CEL faculty affiliate and grant recipient), Beth Simas, Jamie Wright, and David Hilden. Currently entitled "Does Credit Claiming Shape the Public's (Mis)Perceptions of Legislative Effectiveness?" currently being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

29. Accountability: Exploring how effective and ineffective lawmakers communicate with their constituents. Author: Annelise Russell (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Communicating Effectiveness: Legislative Success as Constituent Communication," with research work in progress.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

30. Accountability: Examination of the extent to which effective lawmakers can generate greater amounts of campaign contributions. Coauthors: Geoffrey Lorenz (CEL faculty affiliate), Amy Meli (CEL post-doctoral scholar), Craig Volden, and Alan Wiseman. Currently entitled "Do Campaign Contributions Follow Legislative Effectiveness?" with research work in progress.

31. Accountability: Exploring whether voters hold lawmakers accountable for their effectiveness on issues of greatest salience to their districts. Author: Carlos Algara (CEL faculty affiliate and grant recipient). Currently entitled "Issue Salience and Effective Representation," presented at 2022 American Political Science Association meeting.

32. Accountability: Exploring the nature of political violence. Co-Authors: Alexandra Filindra (CEL grant recipient), Laurel Harbridge-Yong (CEL faculty affiliate), John Cluverius, and Joshua Dyck. Currently entitled "Domestic Terrorism Targeting America's Political Elites," with research work in progress.

33. Accountability: Exploring the determinants of roll call votes in Congress and how they relate to the prospects for legislative compromise. Author: Christian Fong (CEL faculty affiliate and grant recipient). Currently entitled "Enabling Compromise," with research work in progress.

34. States (and Identification): Exploring the extent to which effective lawmaking in state legislatures translates into effective lawmaking in Congress. Coauthors: Peter Bucchianeri (CEL research affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan Wiseman. Currently entitled "Moving on Up: Are State Legislatures Good Training Grounds for Effective Congressional Lawmaking?" currently being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

35. States (and Identification): Exploring the rise in the number of veterans serving in state legislatures and their relative effectiveness at lawmaking. Coauthors: Nicole Kliewer (CEL grant recipient), Craig Volden, and Alan Wiseman. Currently entitled "The Lawmaking Effectiveness of Veterans in State Legislatures," with research work in progress.

36. States (and Identification): Exploring whether effective or ineffective state lawmakers are more likely to run for Congress and win their elections. Coauthors: Danielle Thomsen (CEL faculty affiliate), Sarah A. Treul (CEL faculty affiliate), Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman. Currently entitled "Legislative Effectiveness, Progressive Ambition, and Electoral Success," presented at the 2022 American Political Science Association conference, being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Received American Political Science Association *SPPQ* Award for best conference paper on state politics and policy presented in 2022.
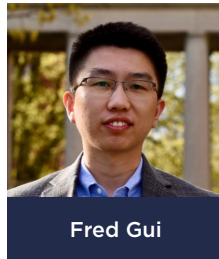
RESEARCH PROJECTS

37. States (and Identification): Exploring how female legislators are evaluated in regards to their lawmaking effectiveness by their peers in the North Carolina State Legislature. Coauthors: Jaclyn Kaslovsky (CEL faculty affiliate and grant recipient), Tabitha Koch, and Michael P. Olson. Currently entitled "Gendered Perceptions of Legislative Influence," presented at the 2024 State Politics and Policy Association Annual Meetings, being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

38. States (and Identification): Exploring the relationship between prior occupations and experiences and lawmaking effectiveness in state legislatures. Coauthors: Eric Hansen and Sarah Treul (CEL faculty affiliate and grant recipient). Currently entitled "Prior Experience and State Legislative Effectiveness," presented at the 2024 State Politics and Policy Association Annual Meetings, being revised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

39. States (and Cultivation): Explorations of Black women in state legislatures as "heavy lifters" or legislative initiatives. Author: Jatia Wrighten (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "The Legislative Effectiveness of Black Women," with research work in progress.

40. States (and Cultivation): Exploring state legislators to understand the causes and effects of affective polarization among political elites. Author: Samuel Frederick (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Partisan Identity among State Legislators: The Connection Between Affective and Effective Lawmaking," with research work in progress.

41. States: Exploring Black disenfranchisement in the American South in the 19th Century, and its impact on lawmaking. Author: Michael Olson (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Black Disenfranchisement and the Effectiveness of Southern State Lawmakers," with research work in progress.

42. Comparative legislatures: Extending legislative effectiveness research to Brazil. Author: Beatriz Rey (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Legislative Effectiveness in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Brazil's Chamber of Deputies," with research work in progress.

43. Comparative legislatures: Exploring the lawmaking effectiveness of younger legislators in Nigeria. Author: Abati Omomayowa (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Beyond #NotTooYoungToRun: Legislative Effectiveness of Young Legislators in Nigeria's Legislatures," with research work in progress.

44. Comparative local legislatures: Exploring the effect of term limits in municipalities on the potential for effective local policymaking. Author: Susan Miller (CEL grant recipient). Currently entitled "Legislative Term Limits in Municipalities: How Term Limits Shape Effective Lawmaking at the Local Level," with research work in progress.
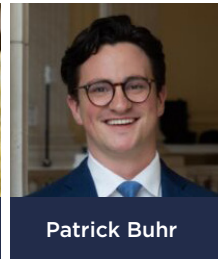
RESEARCH TEAM

Post-Doctoral Fellows and Graduate Affiliates

This year, we hosted two post-doctoral scholars: Arjun Vishwanath (Ph.D., Harvard University) at Vanderbilt University, and Fred Gui (Ph.D., University of Rochester) at the University of Virginia. Patrick Buhr (Vanderbilt University Ph.D. student), Mackenzie Dobson (University of Virginia Ph.D. student) and

Fred Gui

Patrick Buhr

Mackenzie Dobson

Connor Halloran Phillips

Amy Meli

Emily Cottle Ommundsen (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Ph.D. student) served as CEL Graduate Affiliates. Throughout the year, we also employed eleven research assistants between Vanderbilt University and the University of Virginia. For the 2024-25 academic year, the CEL has hired two post-doctoral researchers. At Vanderbilt University, we are hosting Connor Phillips (Ph.D., Harvard University). At the University of Virginia, we are hosting Amy Meli (Ph.D., University of Maryland).
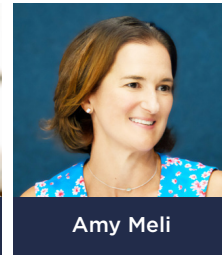
FACULTY AFFILIATES

We began our faculty affiliate program in the Summer 2018. Since then, our network has grown to thirty-four faculty affiliates, located at twenty-six colleges, universities, and think tanks across the United States. Aligned with our diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, twenty of the CEL faculty affiliates are women and/or underrepresented minorities. More than half are actively working on CEL research projects at present. Others are working to advance the CEL mission in other ways, including building connections across scholarly communities and communicating relevant research findings.

This year we proudly added the following affiliates:

Andrew Ballard
Florida State University

Jaclyn Kaslovsky
Washington University in St. Louis

Michael Kistner
University of Houston

Emily Cottle Ommundsen
University of Mississippi

Arjun Vishwanath
Boston University

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Eight enthusiastic supporters of the Center have agreed to serve on our Board. Our Advisors offered excellent guidance on how best to implement different aspects of our strategic plan. Our board has a diverse range of experiences and professional perspectives, having collectively worked in academia, the for-profit consulting industry, and government (including the White House and the U.S. Congress). We are also aiming to expand our board to include a member with extensive connections to the media to enhance our communications strategies, and to expand connections to Congress (especially the Senate and the state legislatures). Our Board of Advisors is co-chaired by Congressman Jason Altmire and Professor Kathryn Pearson of the University of Minnesota.

As the CEL continues to grow, we look forward to expanding our Board of Advisors to help us engage with new goals and activities.

Congressman Jason Altmire
United States House of Representatives (2007-2013)

Sarah Binder
Professor of Political Science, George Washington University

Congressman Tom Davis
United States House of Representatives (1995-2008)

Kyle Nevins
Co-founder, Harbinger Strategies

Kathryn Pearson
Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Minnesota

Dean Ian Solomon
Dean of the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy

Thomas Wickham
Former Parliamentarian of the U.S. House of Representatives

Chancellor Emeritus Nicholas S. Zeppos
Chancellor of Vanderbilt University (2008-2019)

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

We continued our internship program, with both in-person and remote opportunities to allow for work flexibility. A total of three interns were brought on during the academic year and one for the summer of 2024, hailing from the Batten School and Vanderbilt. Students were helpful in writing blogs, reviewing and editing reports and videos, and supporting CEL events and outreach efforts.
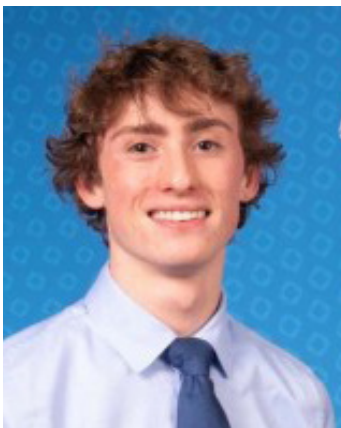
" Being part of the CEL as it expands its impact and continually improves was incredibly valuable, and I am proud that I could help in a variety of ways, whether that was by writing blog posts, following primary races, or completing independent research.

- Wyatt Dayhoff, Fall and Spring 2024 Intern

As an intern for the Center for Effective Lawmaking, I enjoyed writing blog posts about the Center's work and affiliated faculty. It was a valuable opportunity to learn and promote the critical research that CEL is completing and engage with the dynamic world of lawmaking and policy analysis. "

- Jenny Otto, Fall 2024 Intern

" Interning with the CEL gave me a deeper understanding of Congress. I learned how organizations like the CEL can make an impact by educating our elected representatives and advocating for new lawmaking practices. The work of the CEL is helping Congress to better represent their constituents and move our country away from extreme partisanship, and I am proud I was a part of it.

- Riley Munson, Spring and Summer 2024 Intern

Signature Events

We held our **6th Annual Research Conference** at the University of Virginia in June. Following the successful format from previous conferences, the main sessions featured five one-hour-length presentations and discussions, as well as three short presentations from CEL grant recipients and affiliates. Topics ranged from successful lawmaking strategies of women in Congress and the state legislatures, to communicating lawmaking effectiveness during electoral campaigns, to how legislator backgrounds influence their lawmaking behavior, to how to better measure effective lawmaking taking place behind the scenes in Congress.

The conference was well-attended, drawing around 40 scholars from colleges, universities, and think tanks across the United States, as well as engaging with students and faculty at the university. Additional highlights included: pairing the conference with the annual State Politics and Policy Conference of the American Political Science Association (see next section) and a discussion on dysfunction and effective lawmaking in Congress between Co-Director Craig Volden and former House Parliamentarian Thomas Wickham

The CEL organized a panel on effective lawmaking in the states at the 2024 State Politics and Policy Conference in Charlottesville, and accompanied that panel with a luncheon presentation for over 100 conference participants, highlighting the expanding work of the CEL in the state legislative space. Research panels on effective lawmaking emerged organically at three other national research conferences this year – the Southern Political Science Association conference in New Orleans, the Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago, and the Junior Americanist Workshop Series (online). These panels and events are extremely important to spread awareness of research on effective lawmaking to the broader academic community and to build further connections among CEL affiliates.
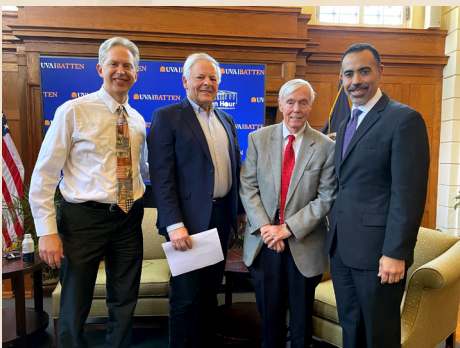
Community Events

In addition to these conferences, the University of Virginia hosted Laurel Harbridge-Yong (Northwestern University) to speak on "Partisanship and the Public Evaluation of Threats and Violence against Elected Officials," as well as to meet with students and faculty members.

In October of 2023, as part of the Karsh Institute's "Democracy 360" events, the CEL hosted a conversation between effective former members of Congress Earl Pomeroy (D-ND) and Peter Roskam (R-IL) at the University of Virginia.

In February of 2024, as part of the Batten School's "Batten Hour," we hosted a conversation on "Effective Lawmaking in Virginia – Past, Present, and Future" with former state legislative leaders Bill Howell (R) and David Toscano (D).
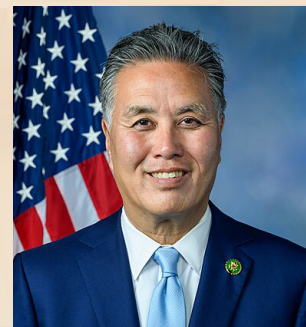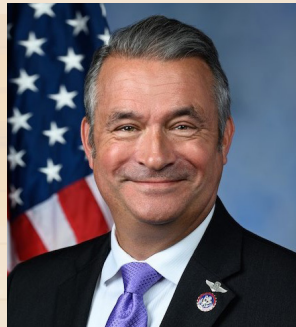
Throughout the year, we also hosted class visits and public-facing events featuring current and former state legislators and members of Congress, including Liz Cheney (R-WY), Barbara Comstock (R-VA), Sally Hudson (D-VA), and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA).

Conversations with Lawmakers Series

We added videos to our "Conversations with Effective Lawmakers" interview series. Specifically, we interviewed Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA, Sept. 2023), Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL, Feb. 2024), Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE, April 2024), and Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA, May 2024). As we continue our expansion into effective lawmaking in the states, we anticipate that more of our Conversations series will feature state lawmakers. In addition, we have compiled short clips drawn from our Conversations series highlighting various habits of highly effective lawmakers on the CEL website, available for faculty around the world to use in their classrooms as of Fall 2024.
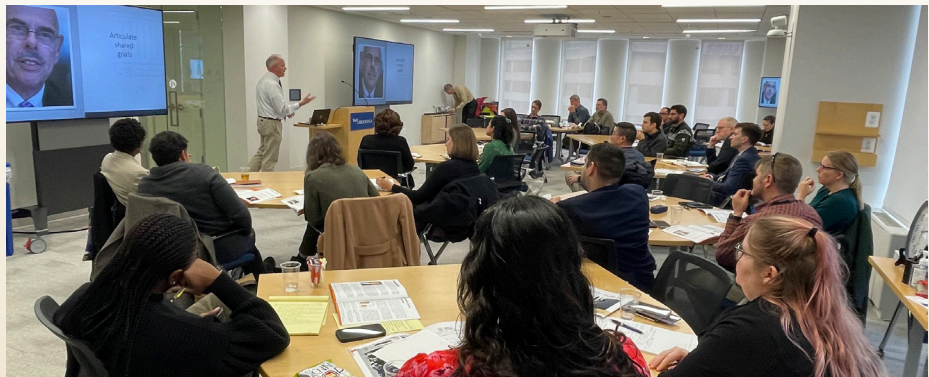
USE OF KNOWLEDGE

We have continued to build relationships with journalists focused on lawmaking on Capitol Hill. In addition, we have begun more concrete conversations with potential partners to help promote the dissemination and use of our Legislative Effectiveness Scores and related research findings.

Partnerships

The Center continued its many relationships with partner organizations on a number of fronts, all in alignment with the CEL mission. We began systematizing the previously ad hoc nature of these partnerships by developing a list of the partnerships, where they have succeeded in the past, and how we can build upon those past successes. Implementing those plans will be the next key step in cultivating and capitalizing upon these relationships.

We maintained existing partnerships for congressional staff training with the Brookings LEGIS Fellows, and the APSA Congressional Fellows Program, while expanding our connections inside Congress with the House Chiefs of Staff Association (HCOSA).

With respect to institutional reforms and support within Congress, we've taken part in meetings and participated in initiatives with the Fix Congress cohort of good governance organizations.

We're expanding connections at the state legislative level as well, including in collaborations with Lyceum Labs and the Leading to Govern Network (including the Future Caucus, the New Deal Forum, the New Politics Leadership Academy, and the Rainey Center). The network has been supportive in opportunities to advance the missions of one another's organizations and in collaborative projects, such as publication of a collection of essays that were authored by these organizations' leaders in a special symposium in *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas.*

We're also exploring partnerships with organizations, such as Partnership for a Secure America (PSA), which provides briefings to congressional staff on the topic of "legislative negotiations." Since its establishment, PSA has "worked to improve bipartisan communication within Congress." As legislative negotiations and fostering bipartisan communication in working relationships are some key principles in effective lawmaking, developing these alliances with organizations sharing similar goals can prove to be beneficial to CEL's overall mission.

Staff Events

Through approximately monthly visits to Capitol Hill, we have been significantly expanding our interactions with congressional staff, lawmakers, good governance partners, and media. Each of these connections have helped us to identify better ways to connect with Congress and its staff.

More concretely, we held five formal presentations and question and answer sessions with groups of congressional staff this year. For example, in September 2023, we briefed the Problem Solvers Caucus and in November of 2023 we briefed the Future Forum Caucus, both on Capitol Hill.

Funding Updates

Thanks to the generous financial support by the U.S. Democracy Program of the Hewlett Foundation and With Honor, today the Center continues to thrive. 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.

Most noteworthy is a newly secured $1.5 million three-year grant from the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, dedicated to our state lawmaking effectiveness work. This grant will allow us to finalize the development of our State Legislative Effectiveness Scores, to continually update those scores at the conclusion of each legislative term, to make them available on websites for broad consumption, to build a research community around the use of these scores and around effective lawmaking in the states more generally, to build connections to media in the states to focus on effective lawmaking, to generate a New Member Guide for all newly elected state legislators, and to pilot some programming for existing lawmakers in various states (starting with Georgia and Montana, where the Blank Family Foundation focuses the bulk of their work). Given the substantial size of this grant, we will be updating certain aspects of our strategic plan to prioritize meeting the goals of this grant-supported effort.

We continue to develop fundraising proposals and communicate with development officers at multiple levels of both of our universities about potential future plans. We seek to cultivate a diverse donor base and make requests for gifts both large and small to support key initiatives advancing the CEL mission.

OUR FUTURE

As we continue to act on our 2023-26 Strategic Plan, the CEL is more confident than ever of the importance of its mission to enhance the effectiveness of individual lawmakers and U.S. legislative institutions. We continue to embrace our founding argument 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). We are proud of what we have accomplished thus far, and look forward to the work we have in store in the future.

Continuing Objectives

- Release updated Legislative Effectiveness Scores at the completion of each Congress

- Cultivate the next generation of scholars through our post-doctoral, graduate affiliate, research assistant, and small grant programs

- Support our faculty affiliates, producing new working papers and publications

- Strengthen our signature congressional engagement programs with additional staff and member briefings

Growth Objectives

- Significantly expand our Office Hours program in Congress

- Update and publicly release our State Legislative Effectiveness Scores

- Adapt our New Member Guide and circulate to newly elected state legislators

- Expand our Conversations with Lawmakers series

The Center for Effective Lawmaking
2024 Annual Report

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