Lawmaking Effectiveness of Potential Republican Senate Majority Leaders
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November 10, 2024

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (KY) is stepping down from his leadership post at the end of the 118th Congress, and the incoming Republican majority in the Senate is beginning to deliberate over the selection of their new leader. Given the leader's role in facilitating lawmaking, it is worth highlighting the relative lawmaking effectiveness among the three most likely candidates: Senator John Cornyn (TX), Senator Rick Scott (FL), and Senator John Thune (SD).

The following tables show, for each previous term in Congress (including, for Senator Thune, his time in the House), whether the Legislative Effectiveness Scores of these three were "below expectations," "meeting expectations," or "above expectations." The Center for Effective Lawmaking calculates a senator's Legislative Effectiveness Score based on how many of their sponsored public bills (S. bills) receive any sort of action in committee, action beyond committee, pass the Senate, and ultimately become law, upgrading "substantive and significant" bills and downgrading commemorative bills.

Drawing on these scores, we then calculate a senator's benchmark score based on their seniority, majority party status, and service as a committee or subcommittee chair. Hence, a senator's benchmark score captures the expected effectiveness of similarly situated senators. Those senators whose actual Legislative Effectiveness Scores are at least 50% above their benchmarks are denoted as being "Above Expectations," while those with scores 50% or more below their benchmarks are denoted as being "Below Expectations" in lawmaking effectiveness. Congresses where the Republicans held the chamber majority are boldfaced.

Senator John Cornyn (TX)

Congress	*Relative Lawmaking Effectiveness*
108 (Freshman Term)	Meets Expectations
109	Meets Expectations
110	Meets Expectations
111	Above Expectations
112	Meets Expectations
113	Meets Expectations
114	Above Expectations
115	Above Expectations
116	Above Expectations
117	Above Expectations

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Senator Rick Scott (FL)

Congress	*Relative Lawmaking Effectiveness*
116 (Freshman Term)	Below Expectations
117	Meets Expectations

Senator John Thune (SD)

Congress	*Relative Lawmaking Effectiveness*
105 (House-Freshman Term)	Meets Expectations
106	Above Expectations
107	Meets Expectations
109 (Senate-Freshman Term)	Meets Expectations
110	Above Expectations
111	Meets Expectations
112	Above Expectations
113	Meets Expectations
114	Above Expectations
115	Above Expectations
116	Meets Expectations
117	Meets Expectations

Comparing these Senators, it is clear that Senator Cornyn and Senator Thune have established similar patterns of lawmaking effectiveness during their times in the Senate. For every term that they have served, they have always at least met expectations, and often have been "above expectations" in lawmaking effectiveness. In other words, they have been more successful at advancing their sponsored bills through the legislative process than similarly situated senators. It's also worth noting that both senators have been highly effective lawmakers regardless of being in the majority or minority party.

Moreover, each has repeatedly been among the most effective Republican lawmakers in the senate. Each has ranked in the top-five Republican senators on four occasions, including with Senator Cornyn as the most effective Republican lawmaker in the senate in the 117th Congress and Senator Thune as the second-highest scorer in the 114th Congress.

Senator Scott, in contrast, during his shorter time in the Senate, has been relatively less successful in advancing his sponsored bills through the legislative process. He was "below expectations" in lawmaking effectiveness during his first two years in the Senate (during his only time with a Republican majority).

As another point of comparison, it is worth exploring how Minority Leader McConnell engaged with the lawmaking process prior to being elected as Senate Leader of the Republican Conference

for the 110th Congress. The following table identifies his relative lawmaking effectiveness for every Congress in which he served, beginning with his freshman term in the 99th Congress, before he was elevated to Republican Leader.

Senator Mitch McConnell (KY), prior to being selected as Leader of Senate Republican Conference in the 110th Congress)

Congress	Relative Lawmaking Effectiveness
99 (Freshman Term)	Below Expectations
100	Meets Expectations
101	Meets Expectations
102	Above Expectations
103	Below Expectations
104	Below Expectations
105	Meets Expectations
106	Below Expectations
107	Meets Expectations
108	Below Expectations
109	Meets Expectations
110	Leader

As we can see, Minority Leader McConnell took a different lawmaking path from Senators Cornyn and Thune. While both Senators Cornyn and Thune have well-established records of successfully engaging with the legislative process, seeing their sponsored bills advance from introduction into law, Senator McConnell was notably less successful at lawmaking before becoming Republican Leader. His lawmaking effectiveness trajectory seems more consistent with the path that Senator Scott has developed over his first few years in Congress.

Of course, Senate Leaders serve roles beyond lawmaking, such as shepherding forward judicial nominees, which has been among Senator McConnell's top priorities. Depending on the extent to which Senate Republicans are seeking a leader with substantial lawmaking experience and success, however, it is clear that Senators Cornyn and Thune have established notably more substantial records of effectively engaging with the lawmaking process than had outgoing Minority Leader McConnell.