



Highlights from the 2023-2024 California Legislative Session Legislative Effectiveness Scores

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Executive Summary

The Center for Effective Lawmaking (CEL) is pleased to announce the release of the State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES) for the recently completed 2023-2024 California legislative session. This report offers highlights from our initial analyses of these scores, including:

- We identify the top-10 most effective lawmakers in each party in the State Assembly and State Senate, including many who continued their patterns of highly effective lawmaking from the previous legislative sessions.
- We identify those lawmakers with the longest streaks of being in our prestigious “Exceeds Expectations” category, as well as first-term lawmakers in this category.
- We find that, consistent with our published research findings, there is an overall lawmaking benefit from being in the majority party. Although some individual minority-party legislators achieved high lawmaking effectiveness, their average scores remain lower than their majority-party counterparts due to structural barriers that they face in trying to advance their agendas.
- Across both chambers, serving as a committee chair is related to greater lawmaking effectiveness. In addition, lawmaking effectiveness is a consistent trait among legislators, with several legislators appearing among the top-10 most effective lawmakers for both the 2023-2024 and 2022-2023 legislative sessions.

Introduction and Methodology

The State Legislative Effectiveness Scores discussed here are based on the combination of fifteen metrics capturing the bills that each member of each state legislature sponsors, how far their bills move through the lawmaking process, and how substantial their policy proposals are. The scores are normalized to an average value of 1.0 in both the State Assembly and the State Senate in each legislative session. More on our [methodology](#) and [scores](#) can be found at our website.

For each member of the State Assembly and State Senate, we also identify a Benchmark Score, based on the average lawmaking effectiveness of legislators who share that legislator’s majority-

or minority-party status, level of seniority, and chair position on a committee. Controlling for these considerations is important in order to describe legislators on a more level playing field. For example, in the 2023-2024 California State Assembly, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.66, compared to 1.10 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 1.19. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.66 in the minority party, 1.09 in the majority party, and 1.08 among committee chairs.

We then label each lawmaker as “Exceeding Expectations” for those outperforming their benchmark scores by 50% or more, “Below Expectations” for those below 50% of their benchmark, and “Meeting Expectations” for all other legislators.

Finally, within each party, we rank each member according to their SLES. This ranking is used to generate the Top Ten lists highlighted in the tables below. Given the substantial lawmaking benefit that follows from being in the majority party, ranking the entire California State Legislature together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 California State Assembly

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring Democrats in the 2023-2024 State Assembly. Unsurprisingly, given the power of committee chairs, seven of the top ten held these important positions.

Top Ten List—House Democrats (2023-2024 California State Assembly)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Philip Ting (District 19)	4.77	Chair
2.	Brian Maienschein (District 76)	1.62	Chair
3.	Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (District 16)	1.57	Chair
4.	Marc Berman (District 23)	1.54	Chair
5.	Laura Friedman (District 44)	1.41	Chair
6.	Isaac Bryan (District 55)	1.38	None
7.	Matt Haney (District 17)	1.37	None
8.	Eduardo Garcia (District 36)	1.36	Chair
9.	Kevin McCarty (District 6)	1.35	None
10.	Jesse Gabriel (District 46)	1.32	Chair

At the top of the list is Assemblymember Philip Ting from District 19 (San Francisco and San Mateo counties) with a score of 4.77. He is also in our “Exceeds Expectations” category for outperforming his benchmark score by 50%, as he had for the three previous General Assemblies. In the 2023-2024 legislative session, he introduced 168 bills, 150 of which received action in committee, 160 of which received action beyond committee, 151 of which passed the Assembly, and 61 of which became law. He has served in the California State Assembly since 2012. He attended U.C. Berkeley and Harvard University, and prior to being elected to the legislature, he

served as the Assessor-Recorder of the City and County of San Francisco. Two other Democratic Assemblymembers on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scores in the 2022-2023 state legislature: Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (District 16) and Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (District 6).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 California State Assembly

The following table identifies the top ten highest-scorers in the 2023-2024 California State Assembly among minority-party Republicans.

Topping our list is Assemblymember Devon Mathis of District 33 (Kings, Tulare, and Fresno counties), with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 0.98, who served as an Assemblymember from 2014 to 2024. He introduced 48 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative session, 37 of which received action in committee, 36 of which received action beyond committee, 19 of which passed the Assembly, and 15 of which became law. Prior to his election to California State Assembly, Mathis served for 10 years as a Sergeant in the Army National Guard, including two tours in Iraq. He graduated from California State University, Fresno, with a B.A., and he earned an M.P.S. from George Washington University. Four Republican Assemblymembers on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scores in the 2022-2023 legislative session: Assemblymember Devon Mathis (District 33), Assemblymember Phillip Chen (District 59), Assemblymember Vince Fong (District 32), and Assemblymember Jim Patterson (District 8).

Top Five List—House Republicans (2023-2024 California State Assembly)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Devon Mathis (District 33)	0.98	5
2.	Juan Alanis (District 22)	0.98	1
3.	Joe Patterson (District 5)	0.97	1
4.	Phillip Chen (District 59)	0.87	4
5.	Tri Ta (District 70)	0.79	1

Highly Effective Democrat Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 California State Senate

Top Ten List—Senate Democrats (2023-2024 California State Senate)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Scott Wiener (District 11)	1.53	Chair
2.	Anthony Portantino (District 25)	1.45	Chair
3.	Bill Dodd (District 3)	1.37	None
4.	Tom Umberg (District 34)	1.37	Chair
5.	Nancy Skinner (District 9)	1.36	Chair
6.	John Laird (District 17)	1.32	None
7.	Dave Cortese (District 15)	1.30	Chair

8.	Josh Becker (District 13)	1.25	None
9.	Aisha Wahab (District 10)	1.23	Chair
10.	Josh Newman (District 29)	1.21	Chair

Among Democrats in the State Senate, Sen. Scott Wiener from District 11 (San Francisco, San Mateo counties) was ranked first in terms of his SLES score, with a score of 1.53. He was also among the top-10 Democratic highest scorers in the 2021-2022 legislative session. In the 2023-2024 session, he introduced 39 bills, all of which received action in committee and action beyond committee, 33 of which passed the Senate, and 21 of which became law. He has represented the 11th District in the Senate since 2016. He earned his bachelor's degree from Duke University and his J.D. from Harvard Law School. Prior to his election to the State Senate, he served on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He also served as Chair of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, represented San Francisco as a commissioner on the regional Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and represented San Francisco as a director on the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District Board.

In the 2023-2024 state legislature, we also find that six of the top-10 Democratic State Senators are also committee chairs. Seven Senators on the list were also among the top-10 highest scoring Democrats in the 2021-2022 state legislature. These Senators are Sen. Scott Wiener (District 11), Sen. Anthony Portantino (District 25), Sen. Bill Dodd (District 3), Sen. Tom Umberg (District 34), Sen. Nancy Skinner (District 9), Sen. John Laird (District 17), and Sen. Josh Becker (District 13).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 State Senate

Top Three List—Senate Republicans (2023-2024 California State Senate)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh (District 23)	1.08	2
2.	Kelly Seyarto (District 32)	0.83	1
3.	Shannon Grove (District 12)	0.66	3

Turning to the Republican Senators in the 2023-2024 legislative session, we find that there is some overlap between the highest performers on the top-10 list for the 2023-2024 legislative session and the preceding top-10 list for Republican legislators in the 2021-2022 legislative session, with Sen. Shannon Grove (District 12), Sen. Brian Dahle (District 1), Sen. Scott Wilk (District 21), and Sen. Brian Jones (District 40) appearing on both lists.

Sen. Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh from District 23 (Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino counties) had the highest SLES for Senate Republicans in the 2023-2024 state legislature, with a score of 1.08. She introduced 40 bills, 38 of which received action in committee, 37 of which received action beyond committee, 26 of which passed the Senate, and 14 of which became law. Sen. Ochoa Bogh has represented the 23rd District in the Senate from 2020 to 2024, and she currently represents the 19th district, following the recent round of redistricting. Ochoa Bogh received her bachelor's

degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She worked as an English teacher and a real estate agent before being elected to the California State Senate.

Lawmakers with Long-Standing Patterns of Exceeding Expectations in Lawmaking Effectiveness

Those who significantly exceed their benchmark score (which is calculated based on a legislator's seniority and status as a majority party member and/or committee chairperson) are identified as being in our "Exceeds Expectations" category. Below we identify the one Assemblymember with the longest active streak of exceeding expectations in consecutive sessions, continuing through (and including) the 2023-2024 legislative session.

Assemblymembers with Longest Streak of "Exceeding Expectations" (through the 2023-2024 California Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Streak</u>	<u>LES (in 2023-2024)</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Philip Ting (D- 19)	4 General Assemblies	4.77	6 General Assemblies

Assemblymember Philip Ting (D) from District 19 (San Francisco and San Mateo counties) tops our list with a 4-session streak of "Exceeds Expectations." As noted above, he was also ranked first among State Assembly Democrats in terms of SLES scores.

High-Performing Freshmen

A useful way to identify lawmakers who might step into roles of greater influence is by examining first-term Assemblymembers and Senators who received an "Exceeds Expectations" rating. These high-performing freshmen lawmakers demonstrate emerging legislative talent.

Freshmen Assemblymembers "Exceeding Expectations" (2023-2024 California Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES (in 2023-2024)</u>
1.	Juan Alanis (R- 22)	0.98
2.	Joe Patterson (R- 5)	0.97

In terms of broader trends, our data show that the California legislature does a surprisingly good job of incorporating freshmen members into the lawmaking process. Over the past 30 years, freshmen members of the State Assembly have an average SLES of 0.92 and freshmen in the State Senate average 0.96. This means that they are nearly as active and effective in lawmaking as their

more senior colleagues. In contrast, for all other states combined, freshmen averages tend to be around 0.65.

Particularly effective freshmen lawmakers in the 2023-24 term include Assemblymembers Gail Pellerin (D-28) with an SLES of 1.09 and Juan Alanis (R-22) with an SLES of 0.98. In the Senate, top performing freshmen include Aisha Wahab (D-10; SLES = 1.23) and Kelly Seyarto (R-32; SLES = 0.83).

Conclusion

Members of the 2023-2024 California legislative session exhibited consistent patterns in legislative effectiveness, with experienced legislators, committee chairs, and majority-party members continuing to hold a distinct advantage in advancing their policy agendas. Across both chambers, many of the most effective lawmakers continued their high performance from previous sessions, indicating a durable capacity for lawmaking among key figures. Additionally, several first-term and minority-party legislators exceeded expectations in their lawmaking effectiveness, highlighting emerging leadership and the value of strategic engagement despite structural disadvantages. These findings underscore the importance of institutional positions and experiences in shaping legislative outcomes in California.