Center for Effective Lawmaking

Highlights from the 246th New York Legislature (2023-2024) Legislative Effectiveness Scores

Craig Volden and Alan E. Wiseman, Co-Directors, Center for Effective Lawmaking

Paige Higginson-Rollins, Program Director for State Legislatures, Center for Effective Lawmaking

12/16/2025

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 246th New York Legislature 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 246th and 245th 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. Following common practice for New York (https://nyslrs.state.ny.us/racfssl.html), legislators also receive credit when an identical bill from the other chamber is substituted in place of their originally-sponsored bill, and that substitute bill ultimately passes their home chamber and/or becomes law. 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 246th New York State Assembly, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.49, compared to 1.23 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 1.98. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.41 in the minority party, 1.29 in the majority party, and 1.31 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 New York State Legislature together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 246th State Assembly

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring Democrats in the 246th State Assembly. Unsurprisingly, given the power of committee chairs, nine of the top ten held these important positions.

Top Ten List—Assembly Democrats (246th Legislative Session)

	Name	**LES**	**Committee Chair**
1.	**Amy Paulin (District 88)**	7.85	Chair
2.	**Linda Rosenthal (District 67)**	5.28	Chair
3.	**Stacey Pheffer Amato (District 23)**	5.13	Chair
4.	**Fred Thiele (District 1)**	3.43	Chair
5.	**John McDonald (District 108)**	3.35	Chair
6.	**Kenneth Zebrowski (District 96)**	2.95	Chair
7.	**Jeffrey Dinowitz (District 81)**	2.79	Chair
8.	**William Magnarelli (District 129)**	2.71	Chair
9.	**Pamela Hunter (District 128)**	2.68	Chair
10.	**Gary Pretlow (District 89)**	2.67	Chair

[See our Conversations with Effective Lawmakers interview with Assemblymember Amy Paulin here]

At the top of the list is Assemblymember Amy Paulin from District 88 (Scarsdale, Edgemont, Eastchester, Bronxville, Tuckahoe, Pelham, Pelham Manor counties) with a score of 7.85. In the 246th legislative session, she introduced 345 bills, 154 received action in committee and action beyond committee, 101 passed the State Assembly, and 67 became law. She has served in the New York Assembly since 2001. She graduated from the State University of New York at Albany, holds a master's degree, and has completed doctoral course work in Criminal Justice from SUNY-Albany. Five Democratic Assemblymembers on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scores in the 245th legislative session: Assemblymember Amy Paulin (District 88), Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal (District 67), Assemblymember Fred Thiele (District 1), Assemblymember Kenneth Zebrowski (District 96) and Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz (District 81).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 246th New York State Assembly

The following table identifies the top ten highest-scorers in the 246th State Assembly among minority-party Republicans.

Top Ten List—Assembly Republicans (246th Legislative Session)

	__Name__	__LES__	__Seniority__
1.	**Christopher Tague (District 102)**	1.18	4
2.	**Philip Palmesano (District 132)**	0.96	7
3.	**Karl Brabenec (District 98)**	0.90	5
4.	**William Barclay (District 120)**	0.86	11
5.	**Brian Maher (District 101)**	0.82	1
6.	**Joseph DeStefano (District 3)**	0.77	3
7.	**Matthew Slater (District 94)**	0.75	1
8.	**Angelo Morinello (District 145)**	0.75	4
9.	**Joseph Giglio (District 148)**	0.69	10
10.	**Edward Ra (District 19)**	0.65	7

Topping our list is Assemblymember Christopher Tague of District 102 (Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Otsego, Schoharie, and Ulster counties), with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 1.18. He introduced 42 bills in the 246th legislative session, 23 received action in committee, 16 received action beyond committee, 16 passed the State Assembly, and 15 became law. Prior to being elected to the New York state legislature, Assemblymember Tague was a dairy farmer and worked at Cobleskill Stone Products as a laborer, foreman, and quarry superintendent before eventually becoming the company's general manager. Four Republican Assemblymembers on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scores in the 245th legislative session: Assemblymember Edward Ra (District 19), Assemblymember Philip Palmesano (District 132), Assemblymember William Barclay (District 120), and Assemblymember Joseph DeStefano (District 3).

Highly Effective Democrat Lawmakers in the 246ᵗʰ State Senate

Top Ten List—Senate Democrats (246ᵗʰ Legislative Session)

	Name	LES	Committee Chair
1.	James Skoufis (District 42)	3.08	Chair
2.	Brad Hoylman-Sigal (District 47)	3.05	Chair
3.	Peter Harckham (District 40)	2.25	Chair
4.	Leroy Comrie (District 14)	2.24	Chair
5.	Kevin Parker (District 21)	2.18	Chair
6.	Gustavo Rivera (District 33)	2.07	Chair
7.	Neil Breslin (District 46)	2.03	Chair
8.	Cordell Cleare (District 30)	1.93	Chair
9.	Michelle Hinchey (District 41)	1.91	Chair
10.	John Mannion (District 50)	1.88	Chair

Among Democrats in the State Senate, Sen. James Skoufis from District 42 (Delaware, Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster counties) was ranked first in terms of his SLES score, with a score of 3.08. He was also among the top-10 most effective Democratic lawmakers in the State Senate in the 245ᵗʰ legislative session. In the 246ᵗʰ session he introduced 428 bills, 120 received action in committee, 179 received action beyond committee, 134 passed the Senate, and 69 became law. He has represented the 47ᵗʰ District in the State Senate since 2012. Prior to being elected to office, he received a bachelor's degree from George Washington University and a master's degree from Columbia University. He worked at Amerigard Alarm & Security Corporation and was on the Woodbury Town Board. He was elected to the New York State Assembly in 2012, making him the youngest member at 25.

In the 246ᵗʰ legislative session, we also find that all ten of the top-10 Democratic State Senators are also committee chairs. Five Senators on the list were also among the top-10 highest scoring Democrats in the 245ᵗʰ legislative session. These Senators are Sen. Brad Hoylman-Sigal (District 47), Sen. James Skoufis (District 42), Sen. Leroy Comrie (District 14), Sen. Gustavo Rivera (District 33), and Sen. Michelle Hinchey (District 41).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 246ᵗʰ State Senate

Top Ten List—Senate Republicans (246ᵗʰ Legislative Session)

	Name	LES	Seniority
1.	Anthony Palumbo (District 1)	0.66	2
2.	Robert Ortt (District 62)	0.63	5
3.	George Borrello (District 57)	0.62	3
4.	Mark Walczyk (District 49)	0.55	1

5.	**Daniel Stec (District 45)**	0.52	2
6.	**Andrew Lanza (District 24)**	0.50	9
7.	**Pamela Helming (District 54)**	0.47	4
8.	**Thomas O'Mara (District 58)**	0.41	7
9.	**Jack Martins (District 7)**	0.40	1
10.	**Robert Rolison (District 39)**	0.40	1

Sen. Anthony Palumbo from District 1 (Suffolk county) had the highest SLES for Senate Republicans in the 246th legislative session, with a score of 0.66. He introduced 129 bills, 14 received action in committee, 30 received action beyond committee, 26 passed the Senate, and 23 became law. Sen. Palumbo previously served as a member of the New York State Assembly. Sen. Palumbo graduated with a bachelor's degree in Government and Law from Lafayette College and a J.D. from St. John's University School of Law. He worked as an assistant district attorney and was eventually promoted to trial supervisor. He left that office in 2004 to open a small practice.

Turning to the Republican Senators in the 246th legislative session, we find that there is substantial overlap between the highest performers on the top-10 list for the 246th legislative session and the preceding top-10 list for Republican legislators in the 245th legislative session, with Sen. Robert Ortt (District 62), Sen. Anthony Palumbo (District 1), Sen. Pamela Helming (District 54), Sen. Andrew Lanza (District 24), and Sen. Daniel Stec (District 45) appearing on both lists.

Lawmakers with Long-Standing Patterns of Exceeding Expectations

Those who significantly exceed their benchmark score (which is calculated based on their seniority and status as a majority party member and/or committee chairperson) are identified as being in our "Exceeds Expectations" category. The lists below identify the Assemblymembers and Senators with the longest active streaks of exceeding expectations in consecutive sessions continuing through (and including) the 246th Legislative Session.

State Assemblymembers with Longest Streak of "Exceeding Expectations" (through the 246th Legislative Session)

	__Name__	__Streak__	__SLES (in 246th)__	__Seniority__
1.	**Linda Rosenthal (D-67)**	9 Legislative Sessions	5.28	10 Legislative Sessions
2.	**Amy Paulin (D-88)**	8 Legislative Sessions	7.85	12 Legislative Sessions
3.	**Michaelle Solages (D-22)**	3 Legislative Sessions	2.65	6 Legislative Sessions
4.	**Steve Stern (D-10)**	3 Legislative Sessions	1.47	4 Legislative Sessions

5.	**Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn (D-42)**	4 Legislative Sessions	1.79	5 Legislative Sessions

Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal (D) of District 67 (Manhattan county) had the longest streak of "Exceeding Expectations," nine legislative sessions, with a SLES score in the most recent Legislative Session of 5.28. Assemblymember Rosenthal was elected to the New York State Assembly in 2006, and she earned a B.A. in history from the University of Rochester. During the 246th legislative session, she introduced 556 bills, 91 of which received action in committee and action beyond committee, 41 of which passed the Assembly, and 36 of her sponsored bills became law.

State Senators with Longest Streak of "Exceeding Expectations" (through the 246th Legislative Session)

	Name	**Streak**	**SLES (in 246th)**	**Seniority**
1.	**Kevin Parker (D-21)**	6 Legislative Sessions	2.19	11 Legislative Sessions
2.	**Leroy Comrie (D-14)**	4 Legislative Sessions	2.25	5 Legislative Sessions
3.	**Brad Hoylman-Sigal (D-47)**	3 Legislative Sessions	3.05	6 Legislative Sessions

Turning to the State Senate, Senator Kevin Parker (D) of District 21 (Kings county) exceeded expectations for 6 consecutive legislative sessions with a SLES score of 2.18. He received a bachelor's of science in public service from Penn State University and worked in several different public sector roles before being elected to the Senate in 2002. During the 246th legislative session he introduced 584 bills, 88 of which received action in committee, 109 of which received action beyond committee, 67 of which passed the Senate, and 20 of his sponsored bills became law.

High-Performing Freshmen

One way to identify future legislative leaders is to identify freshman Assemblymembers and Senators who earned an "Exceeds Expectations" rating in their first term. For freshman legislators, their initial scores are compared to benchmarks for newcomers—so when a freshman outperforms their cohort, it can reveal strong political acumen, the ability to navigate legislative procedures quickly, and skill in coalition-building or policy entrepreneurship. These traits often correlate with future leadership roles. Our research on the U.S. Congress suggests that legislators who perform well early on are more likely to be selected for committee chairs or leadership positions and influence major legislation in subsequent terms. Hence, identifying high-performing freshmen can offer early signals of who might rise through the ranks.

Freshmen Assemblymembers "Exceeding Expectations" (246th Legislative Session)

	Name	SLES (in 246th)
1.	MaryJane Shimsky (D-92)	1.21
2.	Alex Bores (D-73)	1.16
3.	Brian Maher (R-101)	0.81
4.	Matthew Slater (R-94)	0.75

The State Assemblymember with the highest "Exceeds Expectation" score during his freshman term was Assemblymember MaryJane Shimsky from District 92 (Westchester county) with a score of 1.21. She graduated from Yale University and New York University School of Law and earned a PhD in History from the City University of New York. Assemblymembers MaryJane Shimsky, Brian Maher, and Matthew Slater were all reelected to their seats. In addition, Assemblymember Alex Bores announced his candidacy in October 2025 for New York's 12th District in the House of Representatives.

Conclusion

The 246th New York legislative session demonstrated 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. These findings underscore the importance of institutional positions and experiences in shaping legislative outcomes in New York.