



Highlights from the 2023-2024 Kentucky General Assembly 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 Kentucky General Assembly 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 House of Representatives, the top-10 most effective lawmakers in the majority party, and the top-3 most effective minority-party lawmakers in the State Senate. Many lawmakers continued their patterns of highly effective lawmaking from the previous legislative session.
- We identify first-term lawmakers in our prestigious “Above Expectations” category. Our analysis shows that the Kentucky General Assembly effectively integrates freshmen members well. In fact, across both chambers, first-term legislators’ lawmaking success is nearly equally to that of their more experienced colleagues.
- We find that, consistent with our published research findings, there is an overall lawmaking benefit from being in the majority party.
- 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 2021-2022 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 House of Representatives 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 House of Representatives 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 Kentucky House of Representatives, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.36, compared to 1.16 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 1.57. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.50 in the minority party, 1.11 in the majority party, and 1.26 among committee chairs.

We then label each lawmaker as “Above 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 Kentucky General Assembly together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 Kentucky House of Representatives

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring Republicans in the 2023-2024 House of Representatives. Five of the top ten were committee chairs.

Top Ten List—House Republicans (2023-2024 Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Jason Petrie (District 16)	5.82	Chair
2.	Michael Meredith (District 19)	3.98	Chair
3.	Kimberly Moser (District 64)	2.98	Chair
4.	Stephanie Dietz (District 65)	2.58	None
5.	Jason Nemes (District 33)	2.25	None
6.	Patrick Flannery (District 62)	2.23	None
7.	Phillip Pratt (District 41)	2.13	Chair
8.	Josh Bray (District 71)	1.97	None
9.	James Tipton (District 53)	1.95	Chair
10.	David Meade (District 80)	1.93	None

At the top of the list is Representative Jason Petrie from District 16 (Logan, Todd, and Christian counties) with a score of 5.82. In the 2023-2024 legislative session, he introduced 40 bills, 33 received action beyond committee, 23 passed the House of Representatives, and 13 became law. He has served in the Kentucky House of Representatives since 2017. He received his bachelor’s degree in economics and philosophy from Berea College, a master’s degree in humanities from

Western Kentucky University, and a J.D. from The Ohio State University. He opened his own private practice while also serving as a victims advocate and assistant Commonwealth Attorney.

Three Republican Representatives on our current list was also among the top-10 highest scores in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Rep. Jason Petrie (District 16), Rep. Michael Meredith (District 19), and Rep. Kimberly Moser (District 64).

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 Kentucky House of Representatives

The following table identifies the top ten highest-scorers in the 2023-2024 House of Representatives among minority-party Democrats.

Top Ten List—House Democrats (2023-2024 Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Cherlynn Stevenson (District 88)	0.67	3
2.	Ruth Palumbo (District 76)	0.60	17
3.	Keturah Herron (District 42)	0.56	2
4.	Nima Kulkarni (District 40)	0.52	3
5.	Rachel Roberts (District 67)	0.50	3
6.	Josie Raymond (District 41)	0.50	3
7.	Daniel Grossberg (District 30)	0.48	3
8.	Derrick Graham (District 57)	0.46	11
9.	Lisa Willner (District 35)	0.44	3
10.	Ashley Tackett Laferty (District 95)	0.37	3

Topping our list is Representative Cherlynn Stevenson of District 88 (Fayette and Scott counties) with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 0.67. She introduced 26 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative session, 2 of which received action in committee and action beyond committee and 1 of which passed the House and became law. She received her undergraduate degree in behavioral sciences from Morehead State University. Prior to running for office, she was a small business owner and worked in healthcare and manufacturing. She was first elected to office in 2018 and served as the Minority Caucus Chair. She was defeated by Republican Vanessa Grossl in 2024, then declared her candidacy for Kentucky’s 6th congressional district, the seat vacated by former U.S. Representative Andy Barr.

Six Democratic Representatives on our current list was also among the top-10 highest scores in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Rep. Nima Kulkarni (District 40), Rep. Josie Raymond (District 41), Rep. Rachel Roberts (District 67), Rep. Lisa Willner (District 35), Rep. Ashley Tackett Laferty (District 95), and Rep. Cherlynn Stevenson (District 88).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 Kentucky State Senate

The following table identifies the top ten highest-scorers in the 2023-2024 Senate among majority-party Republicans.

Top Ten List—Senate Republicans (2023-2024 Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Robert Mills (District 4)	2.38	Chair
2.	Phillip Wheeler (District 31)	1.94	None
3.	Julie Raque Adams (District 36)	1.86	None
4.	Steve West (District 27)	1.73	Chair
5.	Stephen Meredith (District 5)	1.61	Chair
6.	George Wise (District 16)	1.61	Chair
7.	Jimmy Higdon (District 14)	1.56	Chair
8.	Whitney Westerfield (District 3)	1.54	Chair
9.	Jason Howell (District 1)	1.47	Chair
10.	Matthew Deneen (District 10)	1.39	None

Among Republicans in the State Senate, Sen. Robert Mills from District 4 (Henderson, Hopkins, Union, and Webster counties) was ranked first in terms of his SLES score, with a score of 2.38. In the 2023-2024 session, he introduced 17 bills, 9 received action in committee, action beyond committee, and passed the Senate, and 8 became law. He has represented the 4th District in the State Senate since 2019. Prior to being elected to the State Senate, he served in the Kentucky House of Representatives from 2017 to 2019. He was Daniel Cameron’s running mate in their unsuccessful campaign in the 2023 Kentucky gubernatorial election.

In the 2023-2024 legislative session, we also find that seven of the top-10 Republican State Senators are also committee chairs.

Seven Senators on the list were also among the top 10 highest-scoring Republicans in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Sen. Robert Mills (District 4), Sen. George Wise (District 16), Sen. Julie Raque Adams (District 36), Sen. Jimmy Higdon (District 14), Sen. Whitney Westerfield (District 3), Sen. Phillip Wheeler (District 31), and Sen. Jason Howell (District 1).

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 Kentucky State Senate

Top Three List—Senate Democrats (2023-2024 Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	David Yates (District 37)	1.04	2
2.	Denise Harper Angel (District 35)	0.64	10
3.	Robin Webb (District 18)	0.59	8

Sen. David Yates from District 37 (Jefferson County) had the highest SLES for Senate Democrats in the 2023-2024 legislative session with a score of 1.04. He introduced 37 bills, 4 of which received action beyond committee, 3 of which passed the Senate, and 2 of which became law. Sen. Yates represented the 37th District from 2021 to 2025. He is currently an attorney and serving as the county clerk of Jefferson County. He earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Louisville and a J.D. from Northern Kentucky University. Before entering politics, he was a law clerk for Judge William Bertelsman, and from 2006 to 2008 he served as an assistant attorney general of Kentucky. He also served as a member of the Louisville Metro Council from 2010 to 2020.

Sen. Yates is also among the top 3 highest-scoring Democrats in the 2021-2022 legislative session.

Lawmakers with Long-Standing Patterns of “Above 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 “Above Expectations” category. The lists below identify the Representatives and Senators with the longest active streaks of exceeding expectations in consecutive sessions continuing through (and including) the 2023-2024 legislative session.

State Representatives with Longest Streak of “Above Expectations” (through the 2023-2024 Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Streak</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Kimberly Moser (R-64)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.98	4 Legislative Sessions
2.	David Meade (R-80)	3 Legislative Sessions	1.93	6 Legislative Sessions

Representative Kimberly Moser (R) of District 64 (Kenton County) had the longest streak of “Above Expectations,” 3 legislative sessions, with a SLES score of 2.98 in the 2023-2024 legislative session. Rep. Moser was elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives in 2017. During the 2023-2024 legislative session, she introduced 37 bills, 14 of which received action beyond committee, 10 of which passed, and 9 of which became law. She received a BSN and RN from Spaulding University and completed graduate work in architecture at the University of Kentucky. Rep. Moser is a registered nurse and worked primarily in the neonatal intensive units as well as a flight nurse. She served as president of the Northern Kentucky Medical Society Alliance, Kentucky Medical Society Alliance, and the American Medical Association Alliance. Rep. Moser also founded and served as director of the Office of the Northern Kentucky Drug Control Policy.

**State Senators with Longest Streak of “Above Expectations”
(through the 2023-2024 Legislative Session)**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Streak</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Julie Raque Adams (R-36)	5 Legislative Sessions	1.86	5 Legislative Sessions

Turning to the State Senate, Senator Julie Raque Adams (R) of District 36 (Jefferson County) exceeded expectations for 5 consecutive legislative sessions with a SLES score of 1.86. In the 2023-2024 legislative session, she introduced 18 bills, 11 of which received action beyond committee, 10 of which passed the Senate, and 8 of which became law. She earned a B.A. from Saint Mary’s College and an M.A. from George Washington University. Prior to serving in the Kentucky State Senate, she served as a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives and the Louisville Metro Council. She has been a member of the Kentucky State Senate since 2015.

High-Performing Freshmen

One way to identify future legislative leaders is to identify freshman Representatives and Senators who earned an “Above Expectations” rating in their first term. Freshman legislators’ 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 Representatives “Above Expectations” (2023-2024 Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>
1.	Stephanie Dietz (R-65)	2.58
2.	Rebecca Raymer (R-15)	1.85
3.	Steve Bratcher (R-25)	1.82
4.	John Hodgson (R-36)	1.76
5.	Jared Bauman (R-28)	1.73
6.	Wade Williams (R-4)	1.67

The State Representative with the highest “Above Expectations” score during her freshman term was Representative Stephanie Dietz (Kenton County) with a score of 2.58. In the 2023-2024

legislative session, she introduced 17 bills, 11 of which received action beyond committee, 10 of which passed the House, and 8 of which became law. She earned a B.A. in political science from the University of Kentucky and a J.D. from Northern Kentucky University. She currently owns her own private law practice.

Other Findings

In terms of broader patterns, our data show that the Kentucky General Assembly does a surprisingly good job of incorporating freshmen members into the lawmaking process. For the most recent term, freshmen members of the General Assembly have an average SLES of 0.84 in both the House and the Senate. 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.

In terms of laws, the average freshman member of the House produced 2.3 laws in 2023-24, compared to 2.6 among all others. In the Senate, these averages were 3.1 for freshmen compared to 3.5 laws apiece for more senior Senators.

Conclusion

The 2023-2024 Kentucky 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 Kentucky.