



Highlights from the 68th North Dakota Legislative 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 68th North Dakota Legislative Assembly legislative session. This report offers highlights from our initial analyses of these scores, including:

- We identify the top-10 most effective legislators in the majority party in the House of Representatives and the Senate, the top-5 most effective legislators in the minority party in the House of Representatives and the most effective legislator in the minority party in the Senate. Many listed lawmakers continued their patterns of highly effective lawmaking that they exhibited in the previous legislative session.
- We identify the top lawmaker across both chambers with the longest streak of being in our prestigious “Above Expectations” category.
- We find that, consistent with our published findings, there are lawmaking benefits associated with being in the majority party. Despite their smaller numbers, Democrats performed well in the lawmaking process, and individual Democrats contributed about equally to the lawmaking process as did individual Republicans. However, Republicans overall dominated the lawmaking process, such that 350 of 389 laws that were produced in the 2023-2024 session were sponsored by Republican legislators.
- Lawmaking effectiveness is a consistent trait among legislators, with several legislators appearing among the top-10 most effective lawmakers for both the 68th and 67th Legislative Assembly.

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 68th North Dakota Legislative Assembly House of Representatives, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.81 compared to 1.02 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 1.74. In the State Senate, those averages were 1.27 in the minority party, 0.98 in the majority party, and 1.21 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 lists of top performers highlighted in the tables below. Given the substantial lawmaking benefit that follows from being in the majority party, ranking the entire North Dakota State Legislature together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 68th North Dakota House of Representatives

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring Republicans in the 68th House of Representatives. Four of the top ten were committee chairs.

Top Ten List—House Republicans (68th Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Ben Koppelman (District 16)	4.70	None
2.	Bernie Satrom (District 12)	3.14	None
3.	Lawrence Klemin (District 47)	2.75	Chair
4.	Craig Headland (District 29)	2.71	Chair
5.	Shannon Roers Jones (District 46)	2.71	None
6.	Cynthia Schreiber-Beck (District 25)	2.71	None
7.	Scott Louser (District 5)	2.67	Chair
8.	James Kasper (District 46)	2.08	None
9.	Jeff Hoverson (District 3)	2.06	None
10.	Patrick Heinert (District 32)	1.99	Chair

At the top of the list is Representative Ben Koppelman from District 16 (Cass County) with a score of 4.70. In the 68th legislative session, he introduced 15 bills, all received action beyond committee, 13 passed the House of Representatives, and 9 became law. Rep. Koppelman has served in the House of Representatives since 2012.

Rep. Koppelman attended North Dakota State University before moving on to business and contracting. He later became the president of Vision Construction LLC. Before joining the House, Rep. Koppelman was a member of the West Fargo School Board and served as President for a term. He left the School Board in 2012 to run for the North Dakota House of Representatives.

Five Republican Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scorers in the 67th legislative session: Rep. Ben Koppelman (District 16), Rep. Shannon Roers Jones (District 46), Rep. Scott Louser (District 5), Rep. James Kasper (District 46), and Rep. Patrick Heinert (District 32).

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 68th North Dakota House of Representatives

The following table identifies the top-five highest-scorers in the 68th House of Representatives among minority-party Democrats.

Top Five List—House Democrats (68th Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Joshua Boschee (District 44)	1.56	6
2.	Zachary Ista (District 43)	1.45	2
3.	Corey Mock (District 18)	1.45	8
4.	Alisa Mitskog (District 25)	1.19	5
5.	Gretchen Dobervich (District 11)	0.88	4

Topping our list is Representative Joshua Boschee of District 44 (Cass County) with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 1.56. He introduced 7 bills in the 68th legislative session, 6 of which received action beyond committee, passed the House, and became law. Rep. Boschee served in the House from 2013-2024, and he has been in the North Dakota State Senate since 2025.

Rep. Boschee received a B.A. in political science and a M.Ed. in educational leadership from North Dakota State University. He has experience as a real estate broker.

Three Democratic Representatives on our current list were also among the top-5 highest scorers in the 67th legislative session: Rep. Joshua Boschee (District 44), Rep. Corey Mock (District 18), and Rep. Gretchen Dobervich (District 11).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 68th North Dakota State Senate

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring Republicans in the 68th State Senate. Four of the top ten were committee chairs.

Top Ten List—Senate Republicans (68th Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Jerry Klein (District 14)	3.90	None
2.	Judy Lee (District 13)	3.35	Chair
3.	Jeffery Magrum (District 8)	2.72	None
4.	Kristin Roers (District 27)	1.90	Chair
5.	Janne Myrdal (District 19)	1.87	None
6.	Bob Paulson (District 3)	1.71	None
7.	David Clemens (District 16)	1.58	Chair
8.	Larry Luick (District 25)	1.53	Chair
9.	Mike Dwyer (District 47)	1.48	None
10.	Shawn Vedaa (District 4)	1.40	None

Among Republicans in the State Senate, Senator Jerry Klein from District 14 (Benson, Burleigh, Eddy, Kidder, Pierce, Sheridan, and Wells counties) ranked first with a SLES score of 3.90. In the 68th legislative session, he introduced 19 bills, all of which received action beyond committee, 18 passed the Senate, and 16 became law. Sen. Klein has been in office since 1997.

Sen. Klein graduated with a BSc from the University of Mary and was a grocery store owner for 35 years. He is the assistant Majority Leader and was the President Pro Tempore from 2009 to 2011. He was on the board of the Carrington Health Center, a member of the Harvey Knights of Columbus, past president of the Fessenden Economic Development and the Civic & Commerce Association, and past chair of the North Dakota Grocers Association.

Four legislators on the list were among the top 10 highest-scoring Senate Republicans in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Sen. Jerry Klein (District 14), Sen. Judy Lee (District 13), Sen. Kristin Roers (District 27), and Sen. Janne Myrdal (District 19).

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 68th North Dakota State Senate

The following table identifies the highest-scoring minority-party Democrat in the 68th State Senate.

Most Effective Democratic Lawmaker in the Senate (68th Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Kathy Hogan (District 21)	2.18	3

Senator Kathy Hogan from District 21 (Cass County) had the highest SLES for Senate Democrats in the 68th legislative session with a score of 2.18. She introduced 12 bills, all of which received action beyond committee, 9 of which passed the Senate, and 6 of which became law.

Sen. Hogan joined the Senate in 2018. She previously represented the 21st District in the State House from 2009 to 2018, where she also served as the House Assistant Minority Leader. Sen. Hogan holds a B.A. in sociology from the University of Jamestown and a M.S. in educational counseling from North Dakota State University. She is retired after serving for 40 years in human services, including 28 serving years as the director of Cass County Social Services.

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 with the longest active streaks of exceeding expectations in consecutive sessions continuing through (and including) the 68th legislative session.

**State Representative with Longest Streak of “Above Expectations”
(through the 68th Legislative Session)**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Streak</u>	<u>SLES (68th)</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Ben Koppelman (R-16)	5 Legislative Sessions	4.70	6 Legislative Sessions
2.	Jason Dockter (R-7)	5 Legislative Sessions	1.88	6 Legislative Sessions
3.	Bernie Satrom (R-12)	3 Legislative Sessions	3.14	4 Legislative Sessions
4.	Shannon Roers Jones (R-46)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.71	4 Legislative Sessions

Representative Ben Koppelman (R) of District 16 (Cass County) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 5 legislative sessions and a SLES score of 4.70 in the 68th legislative session. Rep. Koppelman has consistently ranked among the top-10 of most effective Republican lawmakers in the North Dakota House since the 2015 session.

**State Senators with Longest Streak of “Above Expectations”
(through the 68th Legislative Session)**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Streak</u>	<u>SLES (68th)</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Judy Lee (R-13)	12 Legislative Sessions	3.35	15 Legislative Sessions
2.	Janne Myrdal (R-19)	3 Legislative Sessions	1.87	4 Legislative Sessions

Senator Judy Lee (R) of District 13 (Cass County) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 12 legislative sessions and a SLES score of 3.35 in the 68th legislative session. During the 68th legislative session, she proposed 20 bills, all of which received action beyond committee, 15 of which passed the Senate, and 11 of which became law. Sen. Lee has consistently been in among the top-3 of most effective Republican lawmakers in the State Senate since 2001.

Sen. Judy Lee has served in the State Senate since 1995 and was the President Pro Tempore in 2007. She earned a B.S. in medical technology from the University of North Dakota and is a retired real estate broker. In the community, she served on the boards of the Vocational Training Center, the Children’s Advocacy Center of North Dakota, and Eventide Senior Living. For further information about Senator Lee and her approach to lawmaking, see our interview with the Senator as part of our “Conversations with Effective Lawmakers” series [here](#).

High-Performing Freshmen

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

Freshmen Representatives “Exceeding Expectations” (68th Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES (in 68th)</u>
1.	SuAnn Olson (R-8)	1.95
2.	Brandon Prichard (R-8)	1.75
3.	Anna Novak (R-33)	1.51

The top-performing freshman Representative was Representative SuAnn Olson (District 8) with a SLES score of 1.95. In the 68th legislative session, Rep. Olson proposed 5 bills, all of which received beyond committee and passed the House, and 4 became law. Rep. Olson graduated from Concordia College and is a CPA. She is the director of the Miss North Dakota Scholarship Organization, the treasurer of the Sunne Lutheran Church, and a member of the Wilton Lions Club.

Freshmen Senators “Exceeding Expectations” (68th Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES (in 68th)</u>
1.	Jeffery Magrum (R-8)	2.72
2.	Bob Paulson (R-3)	1.71
3.	Dean Rummel (R-37)	1.26
4.	Sean Cleary (R-35)	1.16

The top-performing freshman Senator was Senator Jeffery Magrum (District 8) with a SLES score of 2.72. In the 68th legislative session, he proposed 24 bills, 22 received action beyond committee, 6 passed the Senate, and 3 became law.

Sen. Magrum attended North Dakota State College of Science and is the owner of Magrum Excavating and Plumbing Company. He is a master plumber and a water well contractor. Before the Senate, Sen. Mangrum served as the Mayor of Hazleton, a member of the Emmons County Commission, and as a member of the Emmons County Social Service Board.

Other Findings

In terms of broader patterns, the number of Republicans in both the House and the Senate reached peaks in the 2023-2024 term. Of the 94 Representatives, only 12 were Democrats, while only 4 of the 47 Senators were Democrats. Despite these small numbers, however, individual Democrats contributed about equally to the lawmaking process as did individual Republicans. Whereas nationwide minority-party lawmakers scored an average SLES of about 0.6, in the North Dakota House and Senate Democratic averages were 0.8 and 1.3, respectively.

In terms of bills becoming law, this pattern reflects about 2.3 laws coming from the bills sponsored by Democrats on average, compared to a 2.6 laws per legislator average among House Republicans. In the Senate, Democrats averaged 2.7 laws to 3.1 for Republicans. That said, these individual legislator similarities were swamped by the sheer numbers of Republicans in the chambers relative to Democrats. In the end, 350 of 389 laws produced in 2023-2024 were proposed by Republicans.

Conclusion

The 68th North Dakota legislative session demonstrated consistent patterns in legislative effectiveness, with experienced legislators, committee chairs, and majority-party members (in the House) 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 North Dakota.