



Highlights from the 93rd Minnesota Legislature State 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 93rd Minnesota Legislature legislative session (2023-2024). This report offers highlights from our initial analyses of these scores, including:

- We identify the top-10 most effective legislators in the majority and minority parties in the Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate. Many listed lawmakers continued their highly effective lawmaking patterns from the previous legislative session.
- We identify those lawmakers with the longest streaks of being in our prestigious “Above 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. During the 2023-2024 legislative session, majority-party Democratic-Farm-Labor lawmakers consistently received higher State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES) and achieved better bill outcomes in comparison to minority-party Republican lawmakers. Minority-party Republicans, despite holding nearly half the seats in each chamber, were mostly shut out of the lawmaking process, with only 1 of the 3,804 bills they proposed during the 2023-2024 legislative session becoming law.
- Serving as a committee chair is related to greater lawmaking effectiveness. This phenomenon is highlighted during the 93rd Minnesota Legislature legislative session, where many of the most effective majority-party lawmakers held committee chair positions.
- In addition, our findings indicate that effective lawmakers in one session are likely to remain effective lawmakers across multiple sessions, as several legislators appear on the top-10 lists in 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 93rd Minnesota House of Representatives, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.20 compared to 1.73 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 2.23. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.23 in the minority party, 1.75 in the majority party, and 2.09 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 Minnesota Legislature together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

Highly Effective Democratic-Farm-Labor Lawmakers in the 93rd Minnesota House of Representatives

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

Top Ten List—House Democratic-Farm-Laborers (2023-2024 Legislative Session)

| | <u>Name</u> | <u>LES</u> | <u>Committee Chair</u> |
|----|---|------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Rick Hansen (District 53B) | 5.44 | Chair |
| 2. | Zack Stephenson (District 35A) | 4.80 | Chair |
| 3. | Jamie Becker-Finn (District 40B) | 4.55 | Chair |
| 4. | Aisha Gomez (District 62A) | 3.75 | Chair |
| 5. | Sandra Feist (District 39B) | 3.69 | None |
| 6. | Esther Agbaje (District 59B) | 3.50 | None |

| | | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|------|-------|
| 7. | Kelly Moller (District 40A) | 3.44 | Chair |
| 8. | Dave Pinto (District 64B) | 3.37 | Chair |
| 9. | Kaohly Her (District 64A) | 3.30 | None |
| 10. | Cedrick Frazier (District 43A) | 3.24 | None |

At the top of the list is Representative Rick Hansen from District 53B (Dakota and Washington counties) with a score of 5.44. In the 2023-2024 legislative session, he introduced 99 bills. 35 received action in committee, 34 received action beyond committee, 7 passed the House of Representatives, and 4 became law.

Rep. Hansen joined the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2005. He holds a B.S. in biology from Upper Iowa University and an M.S. in soil management from Iowa State University. Before joining the House, Rep. Hansen worked at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture from 1998-2005. He served on the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Managers from 1996-2005. Now, Rep. Hansen works with Harmony Cedar Inc. and owns a farm in southeast Minnesota.

The second-highest scorer among Democratic-Farm-Laborers in the Minnesota House is Rep. Zack Stephenson (Anoka County) with a score of 4.80. In the 2023-2024 legislative session, he introduced 72 bills, 25 of which received action in committee, 23 received action beyond committee, six passed the House, and five ultimately became law. In 2025 Rep. Stephenson became the House Leader of the Democratic-Farm-Laborers in 2025, following the assassination of Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband on June 14, 2025.

Four DFL Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scorers in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Rep. Rick Hansen (District 53B), Rep. Zack Stephenson (District 35A), Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn (District 40B), and Rep. Kaohly (District 64A).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 93rd Minnesota House of Representatives

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

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

| | <u>Name</u> | <u>LES</u> | <u>Seniority</u> |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Bjorn Olson (District 22A) | 0.56 | 2 |
| 2. | John Petersburg (District 19B) | 0.54 | 6 |
| 3. | Mark Wiens (District 41A) | 0.52 | 1 |
| 4. | Paul Novotny (District 30B) | 0.47 | 3 |
| 5. | Gregory Davids (District 26B) | 0.47 | 8 |
| 6. | Peggy Scott (District 31B) | 0.43 | 8 |

| | | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|------|---|
| 7. | Lisa Demuth (District 13A) | 0.41 | 3 |
| 8. | Duane Quam (District 24A) | 0.41 | 7 |
| 9. | Dave Baker (District 16B) | 0.38 | 5 |
| 10. | Kristin Robbins (District 37A) | 0.36 | 3 |

Topping our list is Representative Bjorn Olson of District 22A (Blue Earth, Faribault, Martin, and Watonwan counties) with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 0.56. He introduced 34 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative session, 5 of which received action beyond committee and 1 of which passed the House.

Rep. Olson has been a member of the House of Representatives since 2021 and served previously as the minority leader. Before joining the House, Rep. Olson served two terms as the Mayor of Elmore, Minnesota. Rep. Olson holds a B.A. in history and social studies from Bethel University. He is a history teacher and farmer and serves as a Major in the United States Army Reserve.

Two Republican Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scorers in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Rep. Gregory Davids (District 26B) and Rep. Duane Quam (District 24A).

Highly Effective Democratic-Farm-Labor Lawmakers in the 93rd Minnesota State Senate

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring DFLers in the 2023-2024 State Senate. Nine of the top ten most effective DFL lawmakers in the Senate were committee chairs.

Top Ten List—Senate Democratic-Farm-Laborers (2023-2024 Legislative Session)

| | <u>Name</u> | <u>LES</u> | <u>Committee Chair</u> |
|------------|---|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | John Hoffman (District 34) | 4.62 | Chair |
| 2. | Bobby Champion (District 59) | 4.38 | Chair |
| 3. | Melissa Wiklund (District 51) | 3.84 | Chair |
| 4. | Ronald Latz (District 46) | 3.04 | Chair |
| 5. | Matt Klein (District 53) | 3.01 | Chair |
| 6. | Mary Kunesh-Podein (District 39) | 2.90 | Chair |
| 7. | Erin Murphy (District 64) | 2.88 | None |
| 8. | Jen McEwen (District 8) | 2.28 | Chair |
| 9. | Aric Putnam (District 14) | 2.22 | Chair |
| 10. | Nick Frentz (District 18) | 2.07 | Chair |

Among DFLers in the State Senate, Senator John Hoffman from District 34 (Anoka and Hennepin counties) ranked first with a SLES score of 4.62. In the 2023-2024 legislative session, he introduced 228 bills, 33 of which received action in committee and action beyond committee and 3 of which passed the Senate and became law.

Sen. Hoffman assumed office in 2013. Before joining the Senate, Sen. Hoffman served on the Anoka-Hennepin School Board and was elected Vice Chair. He has been appointed to several advisory committees, including the State Interagency Coordinating Council and the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council. Sen. Hoffman served as the minority whip from 2017-2022. He has been recognized for his leadership through various accolades, including RISE Minnesota's Legislator of the Year and Adult Teen Challenge's Legislator of the Year. Sen. Hoffman and his wife survived an assassination attempt on June 14, 2025, by the same assailant who assassinated House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband. Sen. Hoffman returned to the Minnesota Senate on February 18, 2026, and he continues to serve in the Senate.

Four legislators on the list were among the top 10 highest-scoring Senate DFLers in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Sen. John Hoffman (District 34), Sen. Bobby Champion (District 59), Sen. Melissa Wiklund (District 51), and Sen. Mary Kunesh-Podein (District 39).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 93rd Minnesota State Senate

The following table identifies the most effective Republican lawmakers in the 2023-2024 State Senate.

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

| | <u>Name</u> | <u>LES</u> | <u>Seniority</u> |
|-----|---------------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| 1. | John Jasinski (District 19) | 0.72 | 4 |
| 2. | Warren Limmer (District 37) | 0.56 | 15 |
| 3. | Jeff Howe (District 13) | 0.50 | 3 |
| 4. | Jim Abeler (District 35) | 0.47 | 5 |
| 5. | Jordan Rasmusson (District 9) | 0.39 | 1 |
| 6. | Eric Lucero (District 30) | 0.32 | 1 |
| 7. | Robert Farnsworth (District 7) | 0.32 | 1 |
| 8. | Rich Draheim (District 22) | 0.29 | 4 |
| 9. | Michael Kreun (District 32) | 0.29 | 1 |
| 10. | Bill Weber (District 21) | 0.29 | 6 |

Senator John Jasinski of District 19 (Hennepin and Wright counties) had the highest SLES for Senate Republicans in the 2023-2024 legislative session with a score of 0.72. He introduced 94

bills in the 2023-2024 legislative session, 15 of which received action in committee and action beyond committee.

Sen. Jasinski was elected to the Senate in 2017. Before joining the Senate, he served four terms as the Mayor of Faribault from 2008-2016 and was on the Faribault City Council from 1996-1998. He also served on the Faribault Economic Development Authority and the Faribault Planning Commission. Sen. Jasinski is a U.S Navy veteran and attended Minnesota State University, Mankato. He currently works as a real estate broker at MDC Real Estate Services in Faribault.

Two legislators on the list were among the top 10 highest-scoring Senate Republicans in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Sen. Jim Abeler (District 35) and Sen. Rich Draheim (District 22).

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 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. | Rick Hansen (DFL-53B) | 4 Legislative Sessions | 5.44 | 10 Legislative Sessions |
| 2. | Zack Stephenson (DFL-35A) | 3 Legislative Sessions | 4.80 | 3 Legislative Sessions |

Representative Rick Hansen (DFL) of District 53B (Dakota and Washington counties) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 4 legislative sessions and a SLES score of 5.44 in the 2023-2024 legislative session. Rep. Hansen (as noted above) ranked as the most effective legislator in the 93rd Minnesota House of Representatives. In addition, he has consistently been ranked among the top-10 most effective DFL lawmakers in the House since 2017.

**State Senator 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. | Melissa Wiklund (DFL-51) | 3 Legislative Sessions | 3.84 | 6 Legislative Sessions |

Senator Melissa Wiklund (DFL) of District 51 (Hennepin County) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 3 legislative sessions and a SLES score of 3.84 in the 2023-2024 legislative session. During the 2023-2024 legislative session, Sen. Wiklund proposed 78 bills, 26 of which received action in committee and action beyond committee, 5 of which passed the Senate, and 2 of which became law. Sen. Wiklund has consistently ranked among the top-10 most effective DFL lawmakers in the Senate since 2019.

Sen. Wiklund assumed office in 2013. She holds a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from the University of Minnesota. After graduation, she worked for a Fortune 500 telecommunications company as an engineer. In 2009, Sen. Wiklund was elected to the Bloomington School Board and was eventually elected as Chair. While on the School Board, she was a member of the Districts and Legislative Committees.

High-Performing Freshmen

One way to identify future legislative leaders is to identify freshmen 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 to 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. | Brad Tabke (DFL-54A) | 3.12 |
| 2. | Matt Norris (DFL-32B) | 2.20 |
| 3. | Mark Wiens (R-41A) | 0.52 |
| 4. | Elliot Engen (R-36A) | 0.32 |
| 5. | Shane Hudella (R-41B) | 0.25 |
| 6. | Walter Hudson (R-30A) | 0.24 |
| 7. | Roger Skraba (R-3A) | 0.23 |

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|------|
| 8. | Ben Davis (R-6A) | 0.23 |
|-----------|-------------------------|------|

The State Representative with the highest SLES who also scored "Above Expectations" during his freshman term was DFL Representative Brad Tabke (Shakopee and Scott counties) with a score of 3.12.

During the 2023-2024 legislative session, Rep. Tabke introduced 69 bills, 28 received action in committee, 27 received action beyond committee, 6 passed the House, and 2 became law. While Rep. Tabke was technically a “freshman” legislator in the 2023-2024 legislative session, he had previously served in the Minnesota House between 2019-2020. His prior experience in the chamber likely gave him an advantage over other first-term lawmakers.

Prior to serving in the House, Rep. Tabke was the Mayor of Shakopee from 2012-2016. He is a former chair of the Shakopee Chamber of Commerce and the Shakopee Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, and is also the founder of the Shakopee Diversity Alliance. He holds a B.S. in horticulture from Iowa State University and owns a consulting firm in downtown Shakopee.

The State Representative with the second-highest SLES who also scored "Above Expectations" during his freshman term was DFL Representative Matt Norris of District 32B (Blaine, Lexington, and Anoka counties) with a score of 2.20. During the 2023-2024 legislative session, Rep. Norris introduced 84 bills, 21 received action in committee, 18 received action beyond committee, and 2 passed the House and became law.

Rep. Norris holds a bachelor’s degree in marketing from the University of Minnesota and a J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School. In 2009, Rep. Norris interned in U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar’s office, and he worked as a law clerk for the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee in 2012. From 2010-2017, Rep. Norris worked as a youth planner for the City of Brooklyn Park. Before assuming office in the House, Rep. Norris was a policy director at Youthprise, a Minnesota youth-focused nonprofit advocacy organization.

Freshmen Senators “Above Expectations” (2023-2024 Legislative Session)

| | <u>Name</u> | <u>SLES (2023-2024)</u> |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Zaynab Mohamed (DFL-63) | 2.04 |
| 2. | Jordan Rasmusson (R-9) | 0.39 |

Senator Zaynab Mohamed (DFL) of District 63 (Hennepin County) was the freshman Senator with the highest SLES who scored "Above Expectations" for the 2023-2024 legislative session. She proposed 126 bills during the 2023-2024 legislative session, 16 of which received action in committee and action beyond committee and 1 of which passed the Senate and became law.

Sen. Mohamed immigrated to the United States alongside her family from Somalia when she was young. She holds a degree in human resources from the University of Minnesota. During her career, Sen. Mohamed worked as an advocacy manager for the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Minnesota and has volunteered with Ayada Leads, a Minnesota-based nonprofit that seeks to support black immigrant women in politics. Prior to serving in the Senate, she worked as a policy aide to Minneapolis City Council member Jason Chaves.

Other Findings

In terms of broader patterns, it is difficult to overstate the degree to which minority-party lawmakers are shut out of the lawmaking process in Minnesota, despite nearly even number of seats across the parties. Observers of Minnesota politics have commented on the fact that the incidence of unified government, with the House, Senate, and Governor, being controlled by the same party, paved the way for the Democratic-Farm-Laborers majority successfully advancing numerous policy priorities that had been on its agenda for several years. With regards to lawmaking effectiveness, while the SLES of minority-party lawmakers across the country on the whole averages about 0.6, the scores for minority-party members in Minnesota have fallen to about a third of that, now averaging around 0.23 in the Senate and less than 0.20 in the House. These are the lowest values in the thirty years of our data. Additionally, minority-party legislative successes are mostly limited to early lawmaking stages. For example, only one of the 3,804 bills that Republicans proposed in 2023-2024 became law. In contrast, 125 bills proposed by DFLers became law.

Given that Republicans held nearly half the seats in each chamber, this 125:1 ratio is significantly out of proportion with the relative seat-shares, and well beyond what is seen in nearly every other state legislature across the country. During prior periods of Republican control, there was an analogous dismissal of DFL proposals, although not quite in such an extreme proportion. Whether the parties can seek and find common ground in the current term under split control of the chambers will be of great interest.

Conclusion

The 93rd Minnesota Legislature legislative session demonstrated consistent patterns in legislative effectiveness, with experienced legislators, committee chairs, and majority-party members continuing to hold an 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 Minnesota.