



**Highlights from the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska 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 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska Legislature (2023-2024). This report offers highlights from our initial analyses of these scores, including:

- We identify the top 10 most effective Republican lawmakers and the top 5 most effective Democratic lawmakers in the Alaska House. We also identify the top 5 most effective Republican lawmakers and the top 3 most effective Democratic lawmakers in the Alaska Senate. Many legislators continued their patterns of highly effective lawmaking 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, there is an overall lawmaking benefit to being in the majority party or, in Alaska, to being a member of the cross-party majority coalition. However, we find minority-cross-party coalition members still fared well in the lawmaking process and had average State Legislative Effectiveness Scores above the national average SLES of minority-party lawmakers.
- We find a much more balanced lawmaking pattern across parties in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska Legislature due to the cross-party majority caucus coalitions present in the Alaska Legislature. This suggests lawmaking in Alaska now relies less on formal partisan affiliations, allowing members of both parties and independents to participate actively in the lawmaking process.
- Serving as a committee chair is related to greater lawmaking effectiveness in the Senate. This phenomenon is highlighted during the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska State Senate, where many of the most effective lawmakers across both parties held committee chair positions.
- In addition, our findings indicate that effective lawmakers in one legislative session are likely to remain effective lawmakers across sessions, as several legislators appear among

the lists of most effective lawmakers 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. While the scores capture how successful an individual member of the Alaska House or Senate is at advancing her sponsored bills, compared to all members of her chamber (in a legislative term), it's important to be cognizant of the fact that the State Legislative Effectiveness Scores do not capture lawmaking activities that occur behind the scenes, such as legislators advocating for the passage of bills that they haven't sponsored. The scores also don't capture how effective individual members of the House or Senate are at blocking the advancement of other legislators' sponsored bills. To the extent that we are interested in identifying who is most successful at advancing their sponsored legislation through the different stages of the lawmaking process (and why), however, the State Legislative Effectiveness Scores provide us with an objective indicator of legislators' efforts. More on our [methodology](#) and [scores](#) can be found on 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 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska House of Representatives, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.67 compared to 1.23 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 1.10. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.57 in the minority party, 1.08 in the majority party, and 1.13 among committee chairs. These considerations are especially important in the context of Alaska, given that for several legislative terms, the governing majority coalition was not necessarily solely members of the political party with the largest number of members. For example, in the Alaska Senate between 2023-2024, the majority governing coalition consisted of a combination of all 9 Democrats and a subset of Republicans. One would expect those Republicans who were not part of the majority governing coalition would have less success in advancing their bills compared to other (majority coalition member Republicans), and we would want to provide the appropriate context for comparing the state legislative effectiveness scores of these members to other members of the Alaska State Senate.

After calculating a Benchmark Score of each legislator, 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.

### Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska 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 Sessions)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	<b>Justin Ruffridge (District 7)</b>	3.18	Chair
2.	<b>Mike Cronk (District 36)</b>	3.09	None
3.	<b>George Rauscher (District 29)</b>	2.76	None
4.	<b>Stanley Wright (District 22)</b>	2.56	None
5.	<b>Sarah Vance (District 6)</b>	2.02	Chair
6.	<b>Mike Prax (District 33)</b>	1.73	Chair
7.	<b>Will Stapp (District 32)</b>	1.72	None
8.	<b>Kevin McCabe (District 30)</b>	1.70	Chair
9.	<b>Frank Tomaszewski (District 34)</b>	1.50	None
10.	<b>Jesse Sumner (District 28)</b>	1.48	Chair

At the top of the list is Representative Justin Ruffridge from District 7 (Kenai and Soldotna) with a score of 3.18. In the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, he introduced 8 bills, 7 of which received action in committee and action beyond committee, 5 passed the House, and 4 became law.

Rep. Ruffridge was elected to the House in 2022. Before joining the House, Rep. Ruffridge served on the Soldotna City Council and as a member of the Soldotna Planning and Zoning Commission. He also served as the Chair of the Alaska Board of Pharmacy, helping to create and enforce regulations on the dispensing of medications and pharmacies across Alaska. Rep. Ruffridge holds a Doctor of Pharmacy Degree from Washington State University. In 2004, he returned to Soldotna and began his career as a pharmacist for Soldotna Professional Pharmacy. Years later, he acquired the Soldotna Pharmacy and Juneau Drug Company and he has since opened Alpine Apothecary in Girdwood.

Rep. George Rauscher (District 29) was the only Republican Representative on our current list to rank among the top 10 highest scorers in both the 2023-2024 and 2021-2022 legislative sessions.

## Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska House of Representatives

The following table identifies the five highest-scoring Democrats in the 2023-2024 House of Representatives.

### Top Five List—House Democrats (2023-2024 Legislative Sessions)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	<b>Andrew Josephson (District 13)</b>	1.96	6
2.	<b>Andrea Story (District 3)</b>	1.76	3
3.	<b>Ashley Carrick (District 35)</b>	1.24	1
4.	<b>William Fields (District 17)</b>	0.85	3
5.	<b>Genevieve Mina (District 19)</b>	0.63	1

Representative Andrew “Andy” Josephson of District 13 (Anchorage) was the most effective Democratic Representative in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 1.96. He introduced 20 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, 11 of which received action in committee, 5 received action beyond committee, and 1 passed the House and became law.

Rep. Josephson was elected to the House in 2012. Before joining the House, Rep. Josephson served on the MOA Municipal Planning and Zoning Commission and the MOA Municipal Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals. He holds a B.A. in history from Whitman College, a master’s in teaching from the University of Alaska Anchorage, and a J.D. from Penn State Dickinson School of Law. During his legal career, Rep. Josephson served as a Superior Court Judicial Law Clerk for the 3rd and 4th Judicial Districts, as an Assistant District Attorney in Kotzebue, and as an adjunct instructor of constitutional law at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Today, he works as an attorney.

Rep. Josephson (District 13) was the only Democratic Representative on our current list to rank among the top 10 highest scorers in both the 2023-2024 and 2021-2022 legislative sessions.

## Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska State Senate

The following table identifies the five highest-scoring Republicans in the 2023-2024 State Senate. Four of the top ten were committee chairs.

### Top Five List—Senate Republicans (2023-2024 Legislative Sessions)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	<b>James Kaufman (District F)</b>	2.39	Chair
2.	<b>David Wilson (District N)</b>	2.12	Chair
3.	<b>Jesse Bjorkman (District D)</b>	1.99	Chair

<b>4.</b>	<b>Robert Myers (District Q)</b>	1.17	None
<b>5.</b>	<b>Catherine Giessel (District E)</b>	1.04	Chair

Among Republicans in the Senate, Senator James Kaufman of District F (Anchorage) ranked first with a SLES of 2.39. In the 2023-2024 sessions, he introduced 14 bills, 12 of which received action in committee, 11 received action beyond committee, and 5 passed the Senate and became law.

Sen. Kaufman joined the Senate in 2023. Before joining the Senate, he represented District 28 in the Alaska House of Representatives from 2021-2023. Before retirement, Sen. Kaufman worked as a resource projects quality manager and team lead in Alaska’s oil and gas industry. After retirement, he became active in the South Anchorage Community Councils and the Anchorage HALO (Anchorage Hillside Home and Landowners Organization) and served as a leader for the Hillside Coalition of Community Patrols; he continues to be involved in efforts to raise awareness of the issues facing Alaska.

Two Senators on the list were among the top 5 highest-scoring Republicans in the 2021-2022 legislative sessions: Sen. David Wilson (District N) and Sen. Robert Myers (District Q).

### **Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska State Senate**

The following table identifies the three highest-scoring Democrats in the 2023-2024 State Senate. Four of the top ten were committee chairs.

#### **Top Three List—Senate Democrats (2023-2024 Legislative Sessions)**

	<u><b>Name</b></u>	<u><b>SLES</b></u>	<u><b>Committee Chair</b></u>
<b>1.</b>	<b>William Wielechowski (District K)</b>	1.82	Chair
<b>2.</b>	<b>Matt Claman (District H)</b>	1.52	Chair
<b>3.</b>	<b>Elvi Gray-Jackson (District G)</b>	1.45	None

Senator William “Bill” Wielechowski of District K (Anchorage) had the highest SLES for Senate Democrats in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions with a score of 1.82. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, he introduced 7 bills, all of which received action in committee and action beyond committee, 4 passed the Senate, and 3 became law.

Sen. Wielechowski assumed office in 2007. Before joining the Senate, Sen. Wielechowski served on the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission, on the Anchorage School District Budget Review Team, and as a member of the Alaska Workers’ Compensation Board. Currently, in addition to his tenure in the Senate, Sen. Wielechowski is a member of the Northeast Community Council Executive Board. Sen. Wielechowski holds a B.S. and a J.D. from Seton Hall University. Currently, he is employed as an attorney for the IBEW Local 1547. Previously, Sen. Wielechowski

served as the acting Chief of Adjudications for the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson (District G) was the only Democratic Senator on our current list to rank among the top 10 highest scorers in both the 2023-2024 and 2021-2022 legislative sessions.

**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 member of the majority coalition and/or committee chairperson, are identified as being in our “Above Expectations” category. Below, we identify the Representative and Senator with the longest active streaks of exceeding expectations in consecutive sessions continuing through (and including) the 2023-2024 legislative sessions.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Streak</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	<b>George Rauscher (R-29)</b>	3 Legislative Sessions	2.76	4 Legislative Sessions

Representative George Rauscher (R) of District 29 (Sutton) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 3 legislative sessions and an SLES of 2.76 during the 2023-2024 legislative sessions. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, Rep. Rauscher introduced 20 bills, 17 of which received action in committee, 9 received action beyond committee, 5 passed the House, and 1 became law.

Rep. Rauscher joined the Alaska House in 2017 and served until 2025, and from 2022-2024, he served as the Majority Whip. In November 2025, Rep. Rauscher was appointed to District O's seat in the Alaska Senate. Before joining the State Legislature in 2006, Rep. Rauscher was elected to the Sutton Community Council, and he was later elected to serve as President. Rep. Rauscher began his career in the oil industry, and he later opened his own construction company. While working in the Legislature, Rep. Rauscher has been appointed to the Sustainable Energy Task Force, has represented Alaska on the State House Energy Council, and co-chairs the Food and Farm Caucus.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Streak</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	David Wilson (R-N)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.12	4 Legislative Sessions

Senator David Wilson (R) of District N (Wasilla) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 3 legislative sessions and an SLES of 2.12 during the 2023-2024 legislative sessions. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, Sen. Wilson introduced 9 bills, 8 of which received action in committee, 7 received action beyond committee, and 4 passed the Senate and became law. In addition, Sen. Wilson has ranked among the top 5 most effective Republican lawmakers in the Senate since 2019.

Sen. Wilson joined the Senate in 2017 and left office in 2024. Before joining the Senate, Sen. Wilson served for 11 years on the Wasilla City Council. He holds a degree in education and psychology from Alaska Pacific University. His career experience includes teaching in rural Alaska and providing technological assistance to Alaska's Community Health Clinics. In 2025, Sen. Wilson joined the Mat-Su Health Foundation (MSHF) as the Director of Public Policy.

**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 Sessions)**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>
1.	Justin Ruffridge (R-7)	3.18
2.	Stanley Wright (R-22)	2.56
3.	Ashley Carrick (D-35)	1.24

4.	<b>Rebecca Himschoot (I-2)</b>	1.06
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Rep. Justin Ruffridge of District 7 (Kenai and Soldotna) had the highest SLES and was “Above Expectations” in lawmaking effectiveness during his freshman term, with a SLES of 3.18. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, as noted above, Rep. Ruffridge was the highest-scoring Republican Representative.

### **Freshmen Senators “Above Expectations” (2023-2024 Legislative Sessions)**

	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>SLES (2023-2024)</u></b>
1.	<b>James Kaufman (R-F)</b>	2.39
2.	<b>Jesse Bjorkman (R-D)</b>	1.99

Republican Senator James Kaufman of District F (Anchorage) had the highest SLES and was “Above Expectations” during his freshman term, with an SLES of 2.39. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, as noted above, Sen. Kaufman was the top-scoring Republican Senator.

### **Other Findings**

In terms of broader patterns, the cross-party majority caucus coalitions in the Alaska Legislature noted above are unique in comparison to other states. Following the 2022 elections, which took place under the new ranked-choice voting and open primary system, there were cross-party governing coalitions in both chambers, but most notably in the Senate. The State Legislative Effectiveness Scores in turn showed the lawmaking patterns in both chambers to be somewhat more egalitarian than we had seen in the past.

For example, in the House, the SLES among those Democrats, Independents, and Republicans who were in the minority caucus averaged a value of 0.67. This is higher than the 0.60 average across all states, and notably above the 0.52 average for minority caucus members from prior terms that we scored (going back to 1993).

In the Senate, the majority coalition, containing sizable memberships of both parties, harkened back to the Senate coalitions from 2007-2012. The 2023-24 Senate also exhibited egalitarianism, as captured by a lower overall variance in Senate SLES Scores than had been seen in decades, and notably present in the highest Score among all Senators being 2.39 (by Senator James Kaufman), a lower top performance than had been seen in decades.

In combination, these indicators in both chambers suggest that lawmaking influence was spread broadly in the Alaska state legislature in 2023-24, indicative that good policy ideas are coming

from legislators across parties and across the state on the whole, rather than clustered in a single party or among a few top performers.

## **Conclusion**

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska Legislature demonstrated consistent patterns in legislative effectiveness, with experienced legislators and committee chairs continuing to hold a distinct advantage in advancing their policy agendas. Across both chambers, several 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 Alaska. In addition, the unique cross-party majority governing coalitions in the Alaska Legislature has corresponded to a more even balance in lawmaking success between the majority and minority coalitions in both chambers, especially in the years since electoral reforms were adopted in 2022.