



**Highlights from the 2023-2024 Florida Legislature 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 Florida Legislature 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 both chambers, the top-10 most effective minority-party lawmakers in the House of Representatives, and the top-5 most effective minority-party lawmakers in the 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.
- We find that, consistent with our published research findings, there is an overall lawmaking benefit from being in the majority party. This is not a new phenomenon in Florida, but was more prominent than previously seen in the Senate. Across the 2023–2024 legislative term, majority-party Republicans consistently outperformed minority-party Democrats in State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES) and bill outcomes. These disparities highlight the institutional advantages of majority-party association.
- In the Senate, serving as a committee chair is related to greater lawmaking effectiveness. Eight of the ten-most effective lawmakers in the majority party in the Senate were committee chairs during the 2023-2024 Florida legislative session.
- 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 top-10 and top-5 most effective lawmakers list in both the 2023-2024 and 2021-2022 legislative sessions.
- The 2023-2024 term featured a larger partisan divide in the Senate than in prior terms, where the average Democrat succeeded in seeing two laws emerging from their proposals,

whereas the average Republican saw seven laws emerging from their proposals. In the House, the average Democrat only produced half as many laws as the average Republican.

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 Florida House of Representatives, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.87 compared to 1.05 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 0.70. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.52 in the minority party, 1.20 in the majority party, and 1.36 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 Florida Legislature together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

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

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring Republicans in the 2023-2024 House of Representatives.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Jason Shoaf (District 7)	5.04	3
2.	Patt Maney (District 4)	3.39	2
3.	Alex Andrade (District 2)	2.96	3
4.	Chip LaMarca (District 100)	2.91	3
5.	Lauren Melo (District 82)	2.63	2
6.	Wyman Duggan (District 12)	2.60	3

7.	James Buchanan (District 74)	2.57	3
7.	John Snyder (District 86)	2.57	2
9.	Robert Brackett (District 34)	2.30	1
10.	Thomas Fabricio (District 110)	2.25	2

At the top of the list is Representative Jason Shoaf from District 7 (Calhoun, Gulf, Liberty, Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson, Madison, Taylor, and Lafayette counties) with a score of 5.04. In the 2023-2024 legislative session, he introduced 10 bills, 6 received action in committee and action beyond committee, and 5 passed the House and became law. Rep. Shoaf has served in the Florida House of Representatives since 2019 and is the nephew of former Governor Wayne Mixson. He attended Tallahassee Community College and Florida State University. Before entering public office, Rep. Shoaf was the Vice President of St. Joe Natural Gas Company, a natural-gas utility provider in the Port St. Joe area. He has an extensive history in the natural gas industry, previously serving as a board member of Triumph Gulf Coast, a state-run nonprofit tasked with distributing funding recovered from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. In addition, Rep. Shoaf was as a member of the Port St. Joe Port Authority Board, which focuses on assessing and expanding the capacity of Port St. Joe, a major deepwater state-designated port along Florida’s Gulf Coast.

Five of the ten most effective Republican lawmakers in the 2023-2024 legislative session were in their third term of service, which illustrates the ways in which seniority can contribute to effective lawmaking, as members are able to develop expertise over time and learn more about the legislative process.

Two Republican Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scorers in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Rep. Jason Shoaf (District 7) and Rep. Wyman Duggan (District 12).

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

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

Top 10 List—House Democrats (2023-2024 Legislative Session)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Michael Gottlieb (District 102)	2.50	3
2.	Dan Daley (District 96)	2.19	3
3.	Allison Tant (District 9)	2.15	2
4.	Marie Woodson (District 105)	2.05	2
5.	Kristen Arrington (District 46)	1.97	2
6.	Joseph Casello (District 90)	1.92	3
7.	Christopher Benjamin (District 107)	1.58	2

8.	Patricia Hawkins-Williams (District 98)	1.46	4
9.	Katherine Waldron (District 93)	1.37	1
10.	Bruce Antone (District 41)	1.32	5

Topping our list is Representative Michael Gottlieb of District 102 (Broward County), with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 2.50. He introduced 14 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative session, 4 received action in committee and action beyond committee, and 1 passed the House of Representatives and became law.

Rep. Gottlieb has served in the House of Representatives since 2018 and was the Minority Floor Leader from 2022 to 2024. He holds a B.A. in political science from George Washington University and a J.D. from Nova Southeastern University. Rep. Gottlieb began his legal career as a law clerk in South Florida. In 1993, he joined the Broward County Public Defender’s Office as an assistant public defender. He later left the Public Defender’s Office and started his own criminal defense practice. Outside of public office, Rep. Gottlieb is involved in various organizations, including the South Florida Chapter of the MS Society and the Epilepsy Foundation of Florida.

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

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

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Jonathan Martin (District 33)	2.47	Chair
2.	Jay Collins (District 14)	2.41	Chair
3.	Daniel Burgess (District 23)	1.90	Chair
4.	Ana Rodriguez (District 40)	1.83	Chair
5.	Nick DiCeglie (District 18)	1.80	Chair
6.	Jennifer Bradley (District 6)	1.79	None
7.	Blaise Ingoglia (District 11)	1.67	Chair
8.	Erin Grall (District 29)	1.66	Chair
9.	Jason Brodeur (District 10)	1.51	None
10.	Alexis Calatayud (District 38)	1.51	Chair

Among Republicans in Senate, Senator Jonathan Martin from District 33 (Lee County) ranked first with a SLES score of 2.47. In the 2023-2024 session, he introduced 70 bills, 52 received action in committee, 50 received action beyond committee, 20 passed the Senate, and 16 became law.

Sen. Martin holds a B.A. and B.S. from Stetson University and a J.D. from Liberty University. During the start of his legal career, Sen. Martin served as an Assistant State Attorney in the 20th

Judicial Circuit of Florida, aiding Hendry, Glades, and Lee counties. Currently, he is a partner at Aloia, Roland, Lubell, & Morgan PLLC, specializing in AV-rated personal injury law. Additionally, he is a former chair of the Lee County Republican Executive Committee, a former Florida Southwestern State College Trustee, and an active member of the Federalist Society.

Four legislators on the list were among the top-10 highest scoring Republicans in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Sen. Daniel Burgess (District 23), Sen. Ana Rodriguez (District 40), Sen. Jennifer Bradley (District 6), and Sen. Jason Brodeur (District 10).

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

The following table identifies the top-five highest scorers in the 2023-2024 State Senate among minority-party Democrats.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Darryl Rouson (District 16)	0.92	4
2.	Lori Berman (District 26)	0.77	3
3.	Tina Polsky (District 30)	0.76	2
4.	Linda Stewart (District 17)	0.73	4
5.	Shevrin Jones (District 34)	0.61	3

Senator Darryl Rouson from District 16 (Hillsborough and Pinellas counties) had the highest SLES for Senate Democrats in the 2023-2024 legislative session, with a score of 0.92. During the 2023-2024 legislative session, he introduced 47 bills, 19 received action in committee and action beyond committee, and 6 passed the Senate and became law.

Sen. Rouson has served in the Senate since 2016. Previously, he represented the 55th and 70th House district in the Florida State House. He holds a B.A. from Xavier University and a J.D. from the University of Florida. During his early career, Sen. Rouson battled addiction and experienced homelessness. His experience encouraged him to devote time to community activism, which has shaped his legislative agenda. After recovering, Sen. Rouson served in a variety of public service roles, including as President of the St. Petersburg NAACP and as Chair of the St. Petersburg Black Chamber. Sen. Rouson is a former Commissioner on the Tax and Budget Reform Commission of 2007 and a former Prosecutor for Pinellas County. Currently, he is an Attorney with Rubenstein Law in Tampa.

Three Democratic state Senators appear on both the top-5 list for the 2021-2022 and 2023-2024 legislative session: Sen. Darryl Rouson (District 16), Sen. Linda Stewart (District 17), and Sen. Shevrin Jones (District 34).

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.	Robert Brackett (R-34)	2.29
2.	Kevin Steele (R-5)	1.97
3.	Kiyan Michael (R-16)	1.92
4.	Katherine Waldron (D-93)	1.37

The State Representative with the highest "Above Expectations" score during his freshman term was Republican Representative Robert Brackett (Indian River and Brevard counties) with a score of 2.29. He also emerged as one of the top 10 most effective Republican representatives during the 2023-2024 legislative session.

During the 2023-2024 legislative session, Rep. Brackett introduced 7 bills, 5 received action in committee and action beyond committee, and 2 passed the House and became law. Rep. Brackett is the former Mayor of Vero Beach. He holds a B.S. in marketing from Lipscomb University, where he also serves on the Board of Trustees. Currently, Rep. Brackett works as the Managing Partner at Edge Information Services and helps run the Brackett Family Limited Partnership. In the community, he sits on the Board of Directors for Indian River Charter High School, operates as an Official with the Florida High School Athletic Association, and is a member of the Beach and Shore Preservation Committee.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>
1.	Jonathan Martin (R-33)	2.47
2.	Jay Collins (R-14)	2.41

Senator Jonathan Martin (R) of District 33 (Lee County) was the freshman Senator with the highest "Above Expectations" SLES score for the 2023-2024 legislative session. Additionally, Sen. Martin was named the most effective legislator in the Florida Senate for the 2023-2024 legislative session.

Other Findings

More broadly, the 2023-2024 term featured a greater partisan divide in the Senate than in prior terms. This is reflected in the SLES of Democrats averaging 0.52, the lowest level seen since the beginning of our data in 2001. That translates into just 2 laws arising from the proposals of the average Democrat, compared to an average of 7 laws per Republican. In total, Democratic Senators sponsored 26 bills that became law, compared to 196 from Republican Senators.

Democrats did not fare much better in the House of Representatives, where the average Democrat produced only half as many laws as the average Republican. Indeed, across both chambers combined, Democrats sponsored 40 bills that became law compared to 259 from Republicans.

Conclusion

The 2023-2024 Florida Legislature 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 Florida.