



Highlights from the 131st Maine 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 recently completed 131st Maine 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 Maine 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 lawmakers consistently received higher State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES) and achieved better bill outcomes in comparison to minority-party Republican lawmakers. However, compared to other states, Maine has a much more egalitarian legislature, with minority-party Republican lawmakers enjoying success despite operating in a unified Democratic-controlled legislature.
- Serving as a committee chair is related to greater lawmaking effectiveness. This phenomenon is highlighted during the 131st Maine 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 131st Maine House of Representatives, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.60 compared to 1.35 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 2.26. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.87 in the minority party, 1.08 in the majority party, and 1.09 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 Maine Legislature together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 131st Maine House of Representatives

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

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Rachel Talbot Ross (District 118)	8.23	None
2.	Melanie Sachs (District 102)	3.97	Chair
3.	Michael Brennan (District 115)	3.59	Chair
4.	Michele Meyer (District 150)	3.51	Chair
5.	Lori Gramlich (District 131)	2.79	Chair
6.	Colleen Madigan (District 64)	2.69	None
7.	Rebecca Millett (District 123)	2.67	None
8.	Maureen Terry (District 108)	2.60	None

9.	Benjamin Collings (District 114)	2.52	None
10.	Laurie Osher (District 25)	2.48	None

At the top of the list is Representative Rachel Talbot Ross from District 118 (Portland and Peaks Island) with a score of 8.23. In the 2023-2024 legislative session, she introduced 62 bills, 60 of which received action in committee, 45 received action beyond committee, 34 passed the House of Representatives, and 21 became law.

Rep. Talbot Ross served in the House of Representatives from 2016-2024 and she was the Speaker from 2022-2024. She now represents the 28th District in the Maine State Senate. Rep. Talbot Ross was the first African American woman to serve in both the House and Senate, and the first African American to serve in leadership in the Maine Legislature. She attended Wesleyan University and American University. Before joining the House, she worked as the Director of Equal Opportunity and Multicultural Affairs for the City of Portland. In addition, she served as President of the Portland Branch of the NAACP, helped to direct the Maine Freedom Trails project, and co-founded the Martin Luther King Jr. Fellows program for high school students of color in Portland.

Four Democratic Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scorers in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Rep. Rachel Talbot Ross (District 118), Rep. Michael Brennan (District 115), Rep. Lori Gramlich (District 131), and Rep. Rebecca Millett (District 123).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 131st Maine 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.	Joshua Morris (District 91)	3.03	3
2.	David Boyer (District 87)	2.74	1
3.	John Andrews (District 79)	2.22	3
4.	Richard Campbell (District 19)	1.74	1
5.	David Woodsome (District 139)	1.71	1
6.	Chad Perkins (District 31)	1.44	1
7.	Steven Foster (District 32)	1.32	3
8.	William Faulkingham (District 12)	1.30	3
9.	Scott Cyrway (District 63)	1.13	1
10.	Amy Arata (District 104)	1.00	3

Topping our list is Representative Joshua Morris of District 91 (Leeds, Turner, and Wayne) with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 3.03. He introduced 25 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative session, all of which received action in committee, 24 of which received action beyond committee, and 10 of which passed the House and became law.

Rep. Morris has been a member of the House of Representatives since 2018. Rep. Morris graduated from the University of Southern Maine with a degree in Political Science. He works in the real estate industry and has worked for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Northeast Real Estate, Prudential Northeast Properties, and ERA Worden Realty. In the community, he is a member of the Maine Association of Realtors, the Nezinscot Lodge in Turner, and the Turner Grammar School Ministerial Fund.

Two Republican Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scorers in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Rep. Joshua Morris (District 91) and Rep. William Faulkingham (District 12).

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 131st Maine State Senate

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring Democrats in the 2023-2024 State Senate. Eight of the top ten most effective Democratic lawmakers in the Senate were committee chairs.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Troy Jackson (District 1)	3.45	Chair
2.	Joseph Baldacci (District 9)	1.94	Chair
3.	Matthea Larsen Daughtry (District 23)	1.87	None
4.	Nicole Grohoski (District 7)	1.81	Chair
5.	Craig Hickman (District 14)	1.53	Chair
6.	Anne Carney (District 29)	1.46	Chair
7.	Michael Tipping (District 8)	1.28	None
8.	Stacy Brenner (District 30)	1.02	Chair
9.	Glenn Curry (District 11)	1.01	Chair
10.	Mark Lawrence (District 35)	1.01	Chair

Among Democrats in the State Senate, Senator Troy Jackson from District 1 (Aroostook) ranked first with a SLES score of 3.45. In the 2023-2024 legislative session, he introduced 84 bills, 77 of which received action in committee, 65 received action beyond committee, 43 of which passed the Senate, and 32 became law.

Sen. Jackson assumed office in 2008. While in the Senate, Sen. Jackson has served as the majority leader, minority leader, and President of the Maine Senate. Before joining the Senate, he served in

the Maine House from 2002-2008. Sen. Jackson is a fifth-generation logger from Allagash. He attended Allagash Consolidated Community High School and holds an A.A. from the University of Maine at Fort Kent. He left office in 2024 and is currently running for Governor of Maine.

Four legislators on the list were among the top 10 highest-scoring Senate Democrats in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Sen. Troy Jackson (District 1), Sen. Matthea Larsen Daughtry (District 23), Sen. Anne Carney (District 29), and Sen. Glenn Curry (District 11).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 131st Maine State Senate

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring effective Republican lawmakers in the 2023-2024 State Senate.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Harold Stewart (District 2)	1.84	2
2.	Eric Brakey (District 20)	1.74	1
3.	Richard Bennett (District 18)	1.34	2
4.	Matthew Pouliot (District 15)	1.28	3
5.	Bradlee Farrin (District 3)	0.75	3
6.	Jeffrey Timberlake (District 17)	0.75	3
7.	Marianne Moore (District 6)	0.71	3
8.	Lisa Keim (District 19)	0.70	4
9.	Russell Black (District 5)	0.67	3
10.	James Libby (District 22)	0.54	1

Senator Harold “Trey” Stewart of District 2 (Aroostook) had the highest SLES for Senate Republicans in the 2023-2024 legislative session with a score of 1.84. He introduced 56 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative session, all of which received action in committee, 45 of which received action beyond committee, 15 of which passed the Senate, and 14 of which became law.

Sen. Stewart was elected to the Maine Senate in 2020 and became the minority leader in 2022. Before joining the Senate, he represented Maine’s 147th House District from 2016-2020. He holds a B.A., M.B.A., and J.D. from the University of Maine. He currently serves as an intelligence officer for the U.S. Navy Reserve. In the community, Sen. Stewart is a member of the Presque Isle Rotary Club, the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce, and the Trinity Masonic Lodge #130. In addition, he served as a volunteer firefighter with the Presque Isle Fire Department for over 5 years.

Eight legislators on the list were among the top 10 highest-scoring Senate Republicans in the 2021-2022 legislative session: Sen. Harold “Trey” Stewart (District 2), Sen. Richard Bennett (District

18), Sen. Matthew Pouliot (District 15), Sen. Bradlee Farrin (District 3), Sen. Jeffrey Timberlake (District 17), Sen. Marianne Moore (District 6), Sen. Lisa Keim (District 19), and Sen. Russel Black (District 5).

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.	Rachel Talbot Ross (D-118)	4 Legislative Sessions	8.23	4 Legislative Sessions
2.	Michael Brennan (D-115)	3 Legislative Sessions	3.59	3 Legislative Sessions
3.	Colleen Madigan (D-64)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.69	4 Legislative Sessions
4.	Benjamin Collings (D-114)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.52	4 Legislative Sessions
5.	John Andrews (R-79)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.22	3 Legislative Sessions
6.	William Faulkingham (R-12)	3 Legislative Sessions	1.30	3 Legislative Sessions

Representative Rachel Talbot Ross (D) of District 118 (Portland and Peaks Island) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 4 legislative sessions and an SLES score of 8.23 in the 2023-2024 legislative session. Rep. Talbot Ross (as noted above) ranked as the most effective lawmaker in the 131st Maine House of Representatives. In addition, she has consistently ranked in the top 2 of most effective Democratic lawmakers in the House since 2019.

**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.	Troy Jackson (D-1)	4 Legislative Sessions	3.45	4 Legislative Sessions

Senator Troy Jackson (D) of District 1 (Aroostook) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 4 legislative sessions and a SLES score of 3.45 in the 2023-2024 legislative session. During the 2023-2024 legislative session, Sen. Jackson (as noted above) was the most effective lawmaker in the Maine Senate during the 2023-2024 legislative session. Sen. Jackson has consistently ranked among the top 5 most effective Democratic lawmakers in the Senate since 2009 and he has been *the* most effective Democratic lawmaker in the Senate since 2013.

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. For freshman legislators, their 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.	David Boyer (R-87)	2.74
2.	Richard Campbell (R-19)	1.74
3.	David Woodsome (R-139)	1.70
4.	Chad Perkins (R-31)	1.44
5.	Scott Cyrway (R-63)	1.13

The State Representative who has the highest SLES and who scored "Above Expectations" during his freshman term was Republican Representative David Boyer (Androscoggin) with a score of 2.74.

During the 2023-2024 legislative session, Rep. Boyer introduced 27 bills, all of which received action in committee, 23 of which received action beyond committee, and 7 of which passed the House and became law. Rep. Boyer (as noted above) was also the second-most effective Republican lawmaker in the House during the 2023-2024 legislative session.

Rep. Boyer owns a small business that sells antique and vintage furniture. He is involved in the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, and Androscoggin Land Trust. In 2018, he helped to run Maine State Senator Eric Brakey's U.S. Senate campaign. He also worked as the Maine Political Director of the Marijuana Policy Project.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>
1.	Eric Brakey (R-20)	1.74
2.	Michael Tipping (D-8)	1.28

Senator Eric Brakey (R) of District 20 (Androscoggin) was the freshman Senator with the highest SLES who also scored "Above Expectations" for the 2023-2024 legislative session. He proposed 63 bills during the 2023-2024 legislative session, all of which received action in committee, 58 of which received action beyond committee, and 4 of which passed the Senate and became law. Sen. Brakey first served in the Senate from 2015-2018 and returned in 2022. His prior experience in the chamber likely gave him an advantage over other first-term lawmakers.

Sen. Brakey moved to Maine in 2012 to work as the state director on Congressman Ron Paul’s campaign for President. After the campaign concluded, Sen. Brakey helped run the Defense of Liberty PAC, a libertarian political action committee in Maine. In 2018, he was the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate, and in 2020, he sought the Republican nomination for Maine’s second Congressional district. In 2024, Sen. Brakey resigned from the Maine Senate to move to New Hampshire.

The State Senator with the second-highest SLES who was also "Above Expectations" during his freshman term was Democratic Senator Michael Tipping of District 8 (Penobscot) with a score of 1.28. During the 2023-2024 legislative session, Sen. Tipping introduced 33 bills, 29 of which received action in committee, 24 received action beyond committee, 15 passed the Senate, and 13 became law.

Sen. Tipping attended Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia and studied political science. He has been a progressive activist in various causes across Maine, including the successful 2016 effort to raise Maine's minimum wage. He currently works for Maine's People's Alliance and Maine's People's Resource Center, focusing on empowering Mainers to advocate for positive political change.

Other Findings

In terms of broader patterns, our data show that the Maine State Legislature achieves a much greater balance in lawmaking effectiveness across parties than is found in most states across the country. For example, in the 2023-2024 term, minority-party Republicans averaged an SLES of 0.60 in the House of Representatives and 0.87 in the Senate. Both of these values exceed the average found across all states recently, and the Senate score is the highest among minority-party Senators in Maine since the beginning of our data in the 1987-1988 term.

Such egalitarianism translates partially into the number of laws produced by the parties. Although over 600 laws resulted from the bills sponsored by majority-party Democrats in 2023-2024, Republican-sponsored bills resulted in nearly 200 laws across the term, indicative that both parties were active and effective in the lawmaking process despite unified Democratic governance in the state.

Conclusion

The 131st Maine 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 Maine.