



Highlights from the 168th New Hampshire General Court 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 168th New Hampshire General Court (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 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 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 findings, there is an overall lawmaking benefit from being in the majority party. Across the 2023–2024 legislative term, majority-party Republicans outperformed minority-party Democrats in State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES) and bill outcomes, especially in the New Hampshire House. However, our analysis finds there is a much greater balance in lawmaking effectiveness across the parties in comparison to most other state legislatures. The average SLES score among minority-party Democratic lawmakers in New Hampshire is higher than the national average, indicating that lawmakers across both parties are relatively active in the lawmaking process despite the unified Republican governance.
- Serving as a committee chair is related to greater lawmaking effectiveness. This phenomenon is highlighted during the 168th New Hampshire legislative sessions where many of the most effective majority-party lawmakers across both chambers 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 New Hampshire House or Senate is at advancing her sponsored bills, compared to all of 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 168th New Hampshire House of Representatives, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.74 compared to 1.27 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 3.79. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.93 in the minority party, 1.05 in the majority party, and 1.12 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 New Hampshire General Court together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 168th New Hampshire General Court House of Representatives

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

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Roderick “Rick” Ladd (District 5-Grafton)	10.66	Chair
2.	John Hunt (District 14-Cheshire)	10.03	Chair
3.	Mark McConkey (District 8-Carroll)	7.31	Chair
4.	Jess Edwards (District 31-Rockingham)	6.99	Chair
5.	Katelyn Kuttab (District 17-Rockingham)	6.87	None
6.	Carol McGuire (District 27-Merrimack)	6.79	Chair
7.	Judy Aron (District 4-Sullivan)	5.92	Chair
8.	Glenn Cordelli (District 7-Carroll)	5.86	None
9.	Bob Lynn (District 17-Rockingham)	5.38	Chair
10.	Mark Proulx (District 15-Hillsborough)	5.38	None

At the top of the list is Representative Roderick “Rick” Ladd from District 5-Grafton (Benton, Haverhill, Landaff, Piermont, and Warren) with a score of 10.66. In the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, he introduced 23 bills, all of which received action in committee and action beyond committee and 15 of which passed the House and became law.

Rep. Ladd joined the New Hampshire House of Representatives in 2008. Before joining the House, Rep. Ladd served as the Chair of the Haverhill Corner Commission and Haverhill Planning Board for six years, and as Chairman for the Haverhill Selectboard for nine years. Rep. Ladd is a U.S. Army Veteran and a former first lieutenant. He holds a B.A. from the University of Maine and an M.S. from the University of Southern Maine. Rep. Ladd is a former elementary school teacher and principal, having also served as a Trustee in the University System of New Hampshire. During his time in the State House, Rep. Ladd has served as Chairman of the House Education Committee for six years.

Three Republican Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scorers in the 2021-2022 legislative sessions: Rep. Roderick “Rick” Ladd (District 5-Grafton), Rep. Carol McGuire (District 27-Merrimack), and Rep. Glenn Cordelli (District 7-Carroll).

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 168th New Hampshire House of Representatives

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

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Ellen Read (District 10-Rockingham)	6.50	4
2.	Rosemarie Rung (District 12-Hillsborough)	4.94	3
3.	David Meuse (District 37-Rockingham)	4.87	3
4.	Eric Gallager (District 20-Merrimack)	4.66	2
5.	Karen Ebel (District 7-Merrimack)	4.41	6
6.	Rebecca McWilliams (District 30-Merrimack)	4.01	3
7.	Peter Bixby (District 13-Strafford)	3.92	6
8.	Sallie Fellows (District 8-Grafton)	3.79	3
9.	Timothy Horrigan (District 10-Strafford)	3.61	8
10.	Nancy Murphy (District 12-Hillsborough)	3.36	1

Topping our list is Representative Ellen Read of District 10-Rockingham (Newfields and Newmarket) with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 6.50. She introduced 28 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, all of which received action in committee and action beyond committee and 3 of which passed the House and became law.

Rep. Read assumed office in 2016. She holds a B.S. in molecular and cellular biology from Vanderbilt University and a master’s degree in liberal studies with a focus on environmental and socioeconomic ethics and policy from the University of New Hampshire. She has experience in political advocacy, community organizing, nonprofit work, and has served as an adjunct professor of American Government at Great Bay Community College. While in the House, she helped found the House Progressive Caucus and served as the state lead for the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. She has been recognized for her work in the state legislature through various accolades, including being named a ‘Woman of Excellence’ by the National Foundation of Women Legislators.

Five Democratic Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scorers in the 2021-2022 legislative sessions: Rep. Ellen Read (District 10-Rockingham), Rep. Rosemarie Rung (District 12-Hillsborough), Rep. Rebecca McWilliams (District 30-Merrimack), Rep. Sallie Fellows (District 8-Grafton), and Rep. Timothy Horrigan (District 10-Strafford).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 168th New Hampshire State Senate

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

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Sharon Carson (District 14)	2.54	Chair
2.	Timothy Lang (District 2)	1.77	Chair
3.	Kevin Avard (District 12)	1.70	Chair
4.	William Gannon (District 23)	1.33	Chair
5.	Howard Pearl (District 17)	1.12	Chair
6.	Dan Innis (District 7)	1.05	Chair
7.	Denise Ricciardi (District 9)	0.93	Chair
8.	James Gray (District 6)	0.86	Chair
9.	Jeb Bradley (District 3)	0.85	None
10.	Regina Birdsell (District 19)	0.76	Chair

Among Republicans in the Senate, Senator Sharon Carson of District 14 (Londonderry) ranked first with a SLES of 2.54. In the 2023-2024 sessions, she introduced 53 bills; all of which received action in committee and action beyond committee; 46 passed the Senate; and 36 became law.

Sen. Carson assumed office in the Senate in 2009 and currently serves as the President of the New Hampshire Senate. She has also been the President Pro-Tempore and Majority Leader. Before joining the Senate, Sen. Carson represented Rockingham's 3rd District in the New Hampshire State House from 2000-2008. Sen. Carson is a retired Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army Reserve member. She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in American History from the University of New Hampshire. She is currently finishing her doctoral dissertation in American History from UNH, and she works as an adjunct history and political science Professor at Nashua Community College. In the community, she is involved in the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission and serves on the Manchester Airport Authority.

Six legislators on the list were among the top 10 highest-scoring Republicans in the 2021-2022 legislative sessions: Sen. Sharon Carson (District 14), Sen. Kevin Avard (District 12), Sen. William Gannon (District 23), Sen. James Gray (District 6), Sen. Jeb Bradley (District 3), and Sen. Regina Birdsell (District 19).

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 168th New Hampshire State Senate

The following table identifies the five highest-scoring Democrats in the 2023-2024 State Senate.

Top Five List- Senate Democrats (2023-2024 Legislative Sessions)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	David H. Watters (District 4)	1.81	6
2.	Suzanne Prentiss (District 5)	1.22	2
3.	Becky Whitley (District 15)	1.14	2
4.	Rebecca Perkins Kwoka (District 21)	0.94	2
5.	Debra Altschiller (District 24)	0.77	1

Senator David Watters of District 4 (Barrington, Dover, Rollinsford, and Somersworth) had the highest SLES for Senate Democrats in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions with a score of 1.81. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, he introduced 43 bills, all of which received action in committee and action beyond committee, 34 of which passed the Senate, and 20 of which became law.

Sen. Watters assumed office in the Senate in 2012. Before joining the Senate, he represented the 4th-Strafford District in the New Hampshire State House from 2008-2012. He attended Dartmouth College and Brown University and was an English Professor for 39 years at the University of New Hampshire. During his career at the University of New Hampshire, Sen. Watters served as the Center for New England Culture's Director. In the community, he has been involved with the New Hampshire Historical Society, the Dover Adult Learning Center, and the Robert Frost Farm Homestead. He is also a founding member of the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire. While serving in the legislature, he has been involved with many organizations, including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and established the New Hampshire Coastal Risks and Hazards Committee.

Two legislators on the list were among the top-5 highest-scoring Democrats in the 2021-2022 legislative sessions: Sen. David Watters (District 4) and Sen. Rebecca Perkins Kowka (District 21).

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 Senator with the longest active streaks of exceeding expectations in consecutive sessions continuing through (and including) the 2023-2024 legislative sessions.

**State Representatives 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.	Carol McGuire (R-27-Merrimack)	8 Legislative Sessions	6.79	8 Legislative Sessions
2.	Timothy Horrigan (D-10-Strafford)	8 Legislative Sessions	3.61	8 Legislative Sessions
3.	Roderick “Rick” Ladd (R-5-Grafton)	7 Legislative Sessions	10.66	8 Legislative Sessions
4.	Glenn Cordelli (R-7-Carroll)	6 Legislative Sessions	5.86	6 Legislative Sessions
5.	David Luneau (D-9-Merrimack)	5 Legislative Sessions	3.22	5 Legislative Sessions
6.	Michael Cahill (D-10-Rockingham)	5 Legislative Sessions	2.74	6 Legislative Sessions
7.	Ellen Read (D-10-Rockingham)	4 Legislative Sessions	6.50	4 Legislative Sessions
8.	Linda L. Tanner (D-5-Sullivan)	4 Legislative Sessions	2.48	4 Legislative Sessions
9.	Michael Harrington (R-18-Strafford)	4 Legislative Sessions	1.97	4 Legislative Sessions
10.	Rosemarie Rung (D-12-Hillsborough)	3 Legislative Sessions	4.94	3 Legislative Sessions
11.	Karen Ebel (D-7-Merrimack)	3 Legislative Sessions	4.41	6 Legislative Sessions
12.	Rebecca McWilliams (D-30-Merrimack)	3 Legislative Sessions	4.01	3 Legislative Sessions
13.	Peter Bixby (D-13-Strafford)	3 Legislative Sessions	3.92	6 Legislative Sessions
14.	Gary Merchant (D-6-Sullivan)	3 Legislative Sessions	3.00	3 Legislative Sessions
15.	Josh Yokela (R-32-Rockingham)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.48	3 Legislative Sessions
16.	Chuck Grassie (D-8-Strafford)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.30	4 Legislative Sessions
17.	Dave Testerman (R-3-Merrimack)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.15	4 Legislative Sessions
18.	Kristina Schultz (D-29-Merrimack)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.13	4 Legislative Sessions

Representative Carol McGuire (R) of District 27 (Allenstown, Dunbarton, Epsom, and Hooksett) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 8 legislative sessions and a SLES of 6.79 in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, Rep. McGuire introduced 16 bills, all of which received action in committee and action beyond committee and 9 of which passed the House and became law. Rep. McGuire has consistently ranked among the top-10 most effective Republican lawmakers in the New Hampshire House since 2011.

Rep. McGuire was first elected to the House in 2008. She earned a B.S. in mechanical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an M.B.A from Boston University. She worked as a mechanical engineer in the aerospace sector but is now retired. In the community, she is a member of the Coalition of New Hampshire Taxpayers and has served on the Epsom budget committee since 2023.

**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 H. Watters (D-4)	6 Legislative Sessions	1.81	6 Legislative Sessions

Senator David Watters of District 4 (Barrington, Dover, Rollinsford, and Somersworth) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 6 legislative sessions and a SLES of 1.81 in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions. Sen. Watters has consistently ranked among the top-5 most effective Democratic lawmakers in the New Hampshire 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. 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.	Katelyn Kuttab (R-17-Rockingham)	6.87
2.	Mark Proulx (R-15-Hillsborough)	5.38
3.	Dan Hynes (R-2-Hillsborough)	4.01
4.	Jason Gerhard (R-25-Merrimack)	3.58
5.	Nancy Murphy (D-12-Hillsborough)	3.36
6.	David Rochefort (R-1-Grafton)	3.36
7.	Hope Damon (D-8-Sullivan)	3.18
8.	John Sellers (R-18-Grafton)	3.18
9.	Dan McGuire (R-14-Merrimack)	2.92
10.	Daniel Popovici-Muller (R-17-Rockingham)	2.64
11.	Kristine Perez (R-16-Rockingham)	2.56
12.	J.R. Hoell (R-27-Merrimack)	2.50
13.	Travis Corcoran (R-44-Hillsborough)	2.32
14.	David A. Bickford (R-3-Strafford)	2.13
15.	Wendy Thomas (D-12-Hillsborough)	2.13
16.	Corinne Cascadden (D-5-Coos)	2.03
17.	Emily Phillips (R-7-Rockingham)	1.87
18.	Mike Belcher (R-4-Carroll)	1.79
19.	Kelley Potenza (R-19-Strafford)	1.69
20.	David Nagel (R-6-Belknap)	1.59
21.	Heath Howard (D-4-Strafford)	1.51
22.	Jerry Stringham (D-3-Grafton)	1.51
23.	Jonah Wheeler (D-33-Hillsborough)	1.51
24.	Tom Mannion (R-1-Hillsborough)	1.43

25.	Lorie Ball (R-25-Rockingham)	1.41
26.	Thomas Cormen (D-15-Grafton)	1.41
27.	Shaun Filiault (D-7-Cheshire)	1.41
28.	Jason Janvrin (R-40-Rockingham)	1.41
29.	Brian Cole (R-26-Hillsborough)	1.33
30.	Alicia Gregg (D-7-Hillsborough)	1.23
31.	Ben Ming (D-35-Hillsborough)	1.23
32.	Chris Muns (D-29-Rockingham)	1.23
33.	Jodi Newell (D-4-Cheshire)	1.15
33.	Jared Sullivan (D-2-Grafton)	1.15

Rep. Katelyn Kuttab of District 17-Rockingham (Windham) was the Representative who had the highest SLES and was rated “Above Expectations” during her freshman term, with a SLES of 6.87. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, Rep. Kuttab introduced 14 bills, all of which received action in committee and action beyond committee, and 10 of which passed the House and became law. She was also the fifth-highest-scoring Republican Representative during the 2023-2024 legislative sessions.

Rep. Kuttab holds an undergraduate degree in computer information systems from the Florida Institute of Technology and works as a software engineer and professional photographer. In the community, Rep. Kuttab is affiliated with multiple organizations and serves as President of the Windham Moms Alliance, President of the Windham Moms Fund, and Treasurer of the Friends of the Library of Windham.

Freshmen Senator “Above Expectations” (2023-2024 Legislative Sessions)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>
1.	Timothy Lang (R-2)	1.77

Republican Senator Timothy Lang of District 2 (Ashland, Belmont, Campton, Center Harbor, Gilford, Holderness, Laconia, Meredith, New Hampton, Sanbornton, Sandwich, and Thornton) had the highest SLES and was “Above Expectations” in his lawmaking effectiveness during his freshman term with an SLES of 1.77. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, Sen. Lang

introduced 41 bills; all of which received action in committee and action beyond committee; 33 passed the Senate; and 19 became law.

Before joining the Senate, Sen. Lang represented New Hampshire's 4th-Belknap District in the State House from 2016-2022. In addition, he is a former school board member, town budget committee member, and zoning board chair. Sen. Lang is a former Sanbornton law enforcement officer and currently works as a managing IT professional for a company that produces concerts across the country. He is also a certified yoga instructor and an ordained minister in the Universal Life Church.

Other Findings

In terms of broader patterns, our data show that the New Hampshire General Court achieves a much greater balance in lawmaking effectiveness across parties than is found in most states across the country. While the SLES of minority-party lawmakers across the country on the whole averages about 0.6, the average scores for minority-party Democrats in the New Hampshire House of Representatives are notably higher at 0.74 and nearly on par with the majority party in the Senate at an average value of 0.93.

Such egalitarianism translates reasonably well into the number of laws produced by the parties. Although nearly 400 laws resulted from the bills sponsored by majority-party Republicans in 2023-2024, Democratic-sponsored bills resulted in more than 200 laws across the term. Such a pattern is indicative that both parties were active and effective in the lawmaking process despite unified Republican governance in the state.

Conclusion

The 168th New Hampshire General Court 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 New Hampshire.