



Highlights from the 2023-2024 Washington 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 2023-2024 Washington Legislature. 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 Washington 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 sessions in Washington, majority-party Democratic lawmakers consistently received higher State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES) and achieved better bill outcomes than minority-party Republican lawmakers. However, we find that there is a much greater balance in lawmaking effectiveness than in most other state legislatures in Washington. In the 2023-2024 sessions, majority-party Democrats were responsible for 348 laws in the House and 267 in the Senate, and minority-party Republicans were responsible for 115 in the House and 116 in the Senate. While still unequal, this comparison highlights the greater balance lawmakers across the Washington Legislature were able to achieve across parties.
- Serving as a committee chair is related to greater lawmaking effectiveness in the Senate. This phenomenon is highlighted during the 2023-2024 Washington Senate legislative sessions, where seven 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. While the scores capture how successful an individual member of the Washington 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 2023-2024 Washington House of Representatives, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.66 compared to 1.23 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 1.22. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.76 in the minority party, 1.16 in the majority party, and 1.40 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 Washington Legislature together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 Washington 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 Sessions)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Amy Walen (District 48B)	2.70	Chair
2.	Mari Leavitt (District 28A)	2.32	None
3.	Jake Fey (District 27B)	2.17	Chair
4.	Kristine Reeves (District 30B)	2.14	None
5.	Tina Orwall (District 33A)	2.14	None
6.	Dan Bronoske (District 28B)	2.12	None
7.	Beth Doglio (District 22A)	1.87	Chair
8.	Marcus Riccelli (District 3A)	1.81	Chair
9.	My-Linh Thai (District 41B)	1.78	None
10.	David Hackney (District 11A)	1.69	None

At the top of the list is Representative Amy Walen from District 48B (King County) with a score of 2.70. In the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, she introduced 42 bills, 34 of which received action in committee, 25 received action beyond committee, 12 passed the House of Representatives, and 11 became law.

Rep. Walen assumed office in 2019. Before joining the House, Rep. Walen served on the Kirkland City Council and as Mayor of Kirkland. Rep. Walen attended the University of Queensland in Queensland, Australia, and graduated from the Law School. She spent nearly 20 years working as CFO for Ford-Hyundai of Kirkland.

Five Democratic Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scorers in the 2021-2022 legislative sessions: Rep. Amy Walen (District 48B), Rep. Mari Leavitt (District 28A), Rep. Jake Fey (District 27B), Rep. Marcus Riccelli (District 3A), and Rep. My-Linh Thai (District 41B).

Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 2023-2024 Washington 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 Sessions)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Gina R. Mosbrucker (District 14B)	1.64	5
2.	Thomas “Tom” Dent (District 13A)	1.17	5
3.	Edmund “Ed” Orcutt (District 20B)	1.00	12
4.	Peter Abbarno (District 20A)	0.96	2
5.	Kevin Waters (District 17A)	0.96	1
6.	Greg Cheney (District 18B)	0.95	1
7.	Travis Couture (District 35B)	0.90	1
8.	Stephanie Barnard (District 8A)	0.89	1
9.	Carolyn Eslick (District 39B)	0.88	4
10.	Sam Low (District 39A)	0.88	1

Topping our list is Representative Gina Mosbrucker of District 14B (Yakima County) with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 1.64. She introduced 21 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, 15 of which received action in committee, 14 received action beyond committee, 11 passed the House of Representatives, and 9 became law.

Rep. Mosbrucker joined the House in 2015 and left office in 2025. While in the House, she served as Minority Vice Caucus Chair. She holds an A.D. from Clark College, a bachelor’s degree from the University of Washington, and a certificate in Senior Executives in State and Local Government from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Rep. Mosbrucker is a certified hotel administrator, and she is the CEO and general manager of the Quality Inn and Suites Hotel in Goldendale. In addition, she owns and operates Touch of Class, a youth performing arts studio. In the community, she has been affiliated with the American Lung and Heart Association and the Cancer Relay for Life.

Four Republican Representatives on our current list were also among the top 10 highest-scoring House Republicans in the 2021-2022 legislative sessions: Rep. Gina Mosbrucker (District 14B), Rep. Thomas “Tom” Dent (District 13A), Rep. Edmund “Ed” Orcutt (District 20B), and Rep. Carolyn Eslick (District 39B).

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

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

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Committee Chair</u>
1.	Marko Liias (District 21)	2.24	Chair
2.	Manka Dhingra (District 45)	2.17	Chair
3.	Derek Stanford (District 1)	1.81	Chair
4.	Claire Wilson (District 30)	1.62	Chair
5.	Sharon Shewmake (District 42)	1.53	None
6.	Karen Keiser (District 33)	1.53	Chair
7.	Mark Mullet (District 5)	1.40	None
8.	Samuel “Sam” Hunt (District 22)	1.35	Chair
9.	Annette Cleveland (District 49)	1.34	Chair
10.	Rebecca Saldaña (District 37)	1.34	None

Among Democrats in the State Senate, Senator Marko Liias from District 21 (Snohomish County) ranked first with a SLES score of 2.24. In the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, he introduced 52 bills, 45 of which received action in committee, 36 received action beyond committee, 22 passed the Senate, and 14 became law.

Sen. Liias assumed office in the Senate in 2014. Before joining the Senate, Sen. Liias represented District 21 in the Washington House of Representatives from 2008-2014, served as a Mukilteo City Councilman, and was a Representative on the Puget Sound Regional Council. He holds a B.A. in government and international relations from Georgetown University and an M.P.A. from the University of Washington’s Evans School of Public Policy and Governance. He currently works as an adjunct college professor and Senior Advisor for the Snohomish County Office of Recovery and Resilience. He has been recognized for his leadership through various accolades, including being named Legislator of the Year by the Washington Student Association and the Washington State Transit Association.

Four legislators on the list were among the top 10 highest-scoring Senate Democrats in the 2021-2022 legislative sessions: Sen. Marko Liias (District 21), Sen. Manka Dhingra (District 45), Sen. Karen Keiser (District 33), and Sen. Samuel “Sam” Hunt (District 22).

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

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

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	John E. Braun (District 20)	1.38	6
2.	Lynda Wilson (District 17)	1.20	4
3.	Curtis King (District 14)	1.17	9
4.	Nikki Torres (District 15)	1.12	1
5.	Ron E. Muzzall (District 10)	1.06	3
6.	Mike Padden (District 4)	0.90	7
7.	Jeff Wilson (District 19)	0.90	2
8.	Shelly Short (District 7)	0.82	4
9.	Matt Boehnke (District 8)	0.81	1
10.	Keith Wagoner (District 39)	0.78	4

Senator John E. Braun of District 20 (Lewis County) had the highest SLES for Senate Republicans in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions with a score of 1.38. He introduced 47 bills in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, 30 of which received action in committee, 25 received action beyond committee, 15 passed the Senate, and 8 became law.

Sen. Braun joined the Senate in 2012, and he has served as Deputy Republican Caucus Leader and Senate Republican Leader. He holds a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Washington, where he was a member of the Naval ROTC. After graduation, he was commissioned as an officer in the United States Navy, joining the submarine force. Sen. Braun served 31 years in the military, including 7 years of active duty and over 2 decades in the Navy Reserve. He achieved the rank of Captain (O-6) and was the Director of the U.S. Navy Submarine Force Reserve Component. After active duty, Sen. Braun joined his family's business, Braun Northwest, and he is currently the company's President. The company specializes in building emergency vehicles, and it is one of Lewis County's largest private employers.

Six legislators on the list were among the top 10 highest-scoring Senate Republicans in the 2021-2022 legislative sessions: Sen. John Braun (District 20), Sen. Lynda Wilson (District 17), Sen. Curtis King (District 14), Sen. Mike Padden (District 4), Sen. Shelly Short (District 7), and Sen. Keith Wagoner (District 39).

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 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.	Gina R. Mosbrucker (R-14B)	4 Legislative Sessions	1.64	5 Legislative Sessions
2.	Thomas “Tom” Dent (R-13A)	4 Legislative Sessions	1.17	5 Legislative Sessions

Representative Gina Mosbrucker (R) of District 14B (Yakima County) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 4 legislative sessions and an SLES score of 1.64 in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions. Rep. Mosbrucker (as noted above) was ranked as the most effective Republican lawmaker in the House during the 2023-2024 legislative sessions. In addition, she has consistently ranked in the top 10 of most effective Republican lawmakers in the House since 2017.

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.	Marko Liias (D-21)	3 Legislative Sessions	2.24	6 Legislative Sessions

Senator Marko Liias (D) of District 21 (Snohomish County) had the longest streak of "Above Expectations" with 3 legislative sessions and an SLES score of 2.24 in the 2023-2024 legislative sessions. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions. Sen. Liias (as noted above) was the most effective lawmaker in the Washington Senate during the 2023-2024 legislative sessions. In addition, Sen. Liias has consistently ranked among the top 2 most effective Democratic lawmakers in the Senate since 2019.

High-Performing Freshmen

One way to identify future legislative leaders is to identify freshman 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 Sessions)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>
1.	Kristine Reeves (D-30B)	2.14
2.	Beth Doglio (D-22A)	1.87

The State Representative with the highest SLES score who was also "Above Expectations" during her freshman term was Democratic Representative Kristine Reeves (King County) with a score of 2.14. During the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, Rep. Reeves introduced 39 bills, 31 of which received action in committee, 22 received action beyond committee, 12 passed the House, and 7 became law. Before rejoining the House in 2023, Rep. Reeves previously served in the Washington House from 2017-2019, before leaving office to run for Washington’s 10th congressional seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Her prior experience in the chamber likely gave her an advantage over other first-term lawmakers.

Rep. Reeves holds a B.A. in political science from Washington State University, an M.A. in organizational leadership from Gonzaga University, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in industrial-organizational psychology at Seattle Pacific University. She is the former regional outreach director for U.S. Senator Patty Murray. Rep. Reeves has also served as Director of the Military Defense Sector at the Washington State Department of Commerce. Now, she owns a small business that provides Community and Economic Development expertise to a variety of organizations.

The State Representative with the second-highest SLES who was also "Above Expectations" during her freshman term was Democratic Representative Beth Doglio of District 22A (Thurston County) with a score of 1.87. In the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, Rep. Doglio introduced 25 bills, 22 of which received action in committee, 16 received action beyond committee, 10 passed the House, and 8 became law. Similar to the experiences of Rep. Reeves, Rep. Doglio had also

served previously in the Washington House of Representatives and chose not to seek re-election in order to run for Congress (And her prior experience in the chamber likely gave her an advantage over other first-term lawmakers.)

Rep. Doglio holds a B.A. in political science and telecommunications from Indiana University. Rep. Doglio has worked as a campaign director for Northwest-based nonprofit Climate Solutions for over 20 years. She was previously employed at Seattle Public Utilities. In addition, Rep. Doglio is a founding member of the Washington Conservation Voters, the Chair of the Board of New Horizons, and serves on the Board of Trustees for South Sound YMCA.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>SLES (2023-2024)</u>
1.	Sharon Shewmake (D-42)	1.53
2.	Nikki Torres (R-15)	1.12

Senator Sharon Shewmake (D) of District 42 (Whatcom County) was the freshman Senator with the highest SLES who scored "Above Expectations" for the 2023-2024 legislative sessions with a SLES of 1.53. She proposed 37 bills during the 2023-2024 legislative sessions, 33 of which received action in committee, 22 received action beyond committee, 16 passed the Senate, and 12 became law. Before joining the Senate, Sen. Shewmake represented District 42 in the Washington State House from 2019-2022.

Sen. Shewmake holds a Ph.D. in Agriculture and Resource Economics from the University of California, Davis, and a bachelor’s degree in economics and a second bachelor’s degree in environmental science from Duke University. She is currently employed as a Professor of Economics and Energy Policy at Western Washington University. Her academic work focuses on how transportation and housing decisions affect the environment.

Other Findings

In terms of broader patterns, our data show that the Washington State Legislature achieves a 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 0.60, the average scores in 2023-24 for minority-party Republicans in the Washington House of Representatives are somewhat higher at 0.66 and in the Senate at an average value of 0.76.

Such egalitarianism translates reasonably well into the number of laws produced by the parties. Although 267 laws resulted from the bills sponsored by majority-party Democratic Senators in 2023-24, bills sponsored by Republican Senators resulted in 116 laws across the term. A bit more

of an imbalance occurred in the House, with 115 laws from the bills of Republicans compared to 348 from majority-party Democrats. However, the overall pattern is indicative that both parties were active and effective in the lawmaking process despite unified Democratic governance in the state.

Conclusion

The 2023-2024 Washington Legislature 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 Washington.