



## **Highlights from the 157<sup>th</sup> Georgia General Assembly (2023-2024) 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 157<sup>th</sup> Georgia General Assembly legislative session. This report offers highlights from our initial analyses of these scores, including:

- We identify the top-10 most effective lawmakers in each party in the State House and State Senate, including many who continued their patterns of highly effective lawmaking from the previous General Assemblies.
- We identify those lawmakers with the longest streaks of being in our prestigious “Exceeds 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. Although some individual minority-party legislators achieved high effectiveness, their average scores remain lower than their majority-party counterparts due to structural barriers.
- Across both chambers, serving as a committee chair position is related to greater lawmaking effectiveness. In addition, lawmaking effectiveness is a consistent trait among legislators, with several legislators appearing among the top-10 most effective lawmaking for both the 157<sup>th</sup> and 156<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

### **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 they 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 State House and the State Senate in each legislative session. More on our methodology and scores can be found at our website: [www.thelawmakers.org](http://www.thelawmakers.org).

For each member of the State House 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 157<sup>th</sup> Georgia State House, minority-party lawmakers had an average SLES of 0.41, compared to 1.46 for majority-party members, while committee chairs had an average SLES of 1.81. In the State Senate, those averages were 0.45 in the minority party, 1.37 in the majority party, and 1.35 among committee chairs.

We then label each lawmaker as “Exceeding 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 Top Ten lists highlighted in the tables below. Given the substantial lawmaking benefit that follows from being in the majority party, ranking the entire Georgia General Assembly together would be inappropriate, but these comparisons within each party are quite informative.

### **Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 157<sup>th</sup> Georgia House of Representatives**

The following table identifies the top ten highest-scorers in the 157<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives among majority-party Republicans. Unsurprisingly, given the power of committee chairs, six of the top ten held these important positions.

Topping our list is State Rep. Rob Leverett of District 123 (Elberton), with a State Legislative Effectiveness Score of 5.57. Rep. Leverett was Chair of the House Committee on Reapportioning and Redistricting in the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, where he was serving his second term in the legislature. Rep. Leverett’s ranking as a highly effective lawmaker continues a pattern of legislative engagement that he established in the previous (156<sup>th</sup>) General Assembly, where he was in our “Exceeds Expectations” grouping among majority party (Republican) legislatures. He introduced 29 bills in the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, 27 received action in committee, 27 received action beyond committee, 25 passed the House, and 19 became law. Three legislators on our current list, Rep. Gerald Greene, Rep. Rob Leverett, and Rep. Bruce Williamson, also appeared in the top-10 highest scorers in the 156<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

#### **Top Ten List—House Republicans (157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly)**

	<u><b>Name</b></u>	<u><b>LES</b></u>	<u><b>Chair Position</b></u>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Rob Leverett (District 123)</b>	5.57	Committee Chair
<b>2.</b>	<b>Gerald Greene (District 154)</b>	5.23	Committee Chair
<b>3.</b>	<b>Kasey Carpenter (District 4)</b>	4.87	Committee Chair
<b>4.</b>	<b>Matt Reeves (District 99)</b>	4.62	None
<b>5.</b>	<b>Victor Anderson (District 10)</b>	3.61	None
<b>6.</b>	<b>Lee Hawkins (District 27)</b>	3.20	Committee Chair
<b>7.</b>	<b>Bruce Williamson (District 112)</b>	3.14	None
<b>8.</b>	<b>Tyler Smith (District 18)</b>	2.89	Committee Chair
<b>9.</b>	<b>Marcus Wiedower (District 121)</b>	2.88	None
<b>10.</b>	<b>Alan Powell (District 33)</b>	2.71	Committee Chair

### Highly Effective Democratic Lawmakers in the 157<sup>th</sup> State House

The following table identifies the ten highest-scoring Democrats in the 157<sup>th</sup> State House.

#### Top Ten List—House Democrats (157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Seniority</u>
1.	Patty Stinson (District 150)	2.35	6
2.	Mesha Mainor (District 56)	2.03	2
3.	Sandra Scott (District 76)	1.99	7
4.	Teri Anulewicz (District 42)	1.39	3
5.	Omari Crawford (District 84)	1.12	1
6.	Mandisha Thomas (District 65)	1.08	2
7.	Yasmin Neal (District 79)	1.06	2
8.	Becky Evans (District 89)	1.05	3
9.	Karen Lupton (District 83)	1.04	1
10.	Kim Schofield (District 63)	0.97	4

At the top of the list is State Rep. Patty Stinson from District 150 (Butler) with a score of 2.35. She is also in our “Exceeds Expectations” category for outperforming her benchmark score by 50% for four consecutive General Assemblies. In the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, she introduced 15 bills, 11 received action in committee, 11 received action beyond committee, 10 passed the House, and 8 became law. She has served in the Georgia House since 2013. Three Democratic Representatives on our current list were also among the top-10 highest scores in the 156<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Rep. Patty Stinson, Rep. Sandra Scott, and Rep. Mesha Mainor.

### Highly Effective Republican Lawmakers in the 157<sup>th</sup> State Senate

#### Top Ten List—Senate Republicans (157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES</u>	<u>Chair Position</u>
1.	Max Burns (District 23)	3.17	Committee Chair
2.	Randy Robertson (District 29)	3.11	None
3.	Ricky Williams (District 25)	2.65	Committee Chair
4.	Kay Kirkpatrick (District 32)	2.52	Committee Chair
5.	Clint Dixon (District 45)	2.49	Committee Chair
6.	Jason Anavitarte (District 31)	2.41	None
7.	John Albers (District 56)	2.39	Committee Chair
8.	Brian Strickland (District 17)	2.26	Committee Chair
9.	Bo Hatchett (District 50)	2.13	None

<b>10.</b>	<b>Greg Dolezal (District 27)</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>Committee Chair</b>
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Turning to the Republican Senators in the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, we find that there is substantial overlap between the highest performers on the top-10 list for the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and the preceding top-10 list for Republican legislators in the 156<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, with Sen. Randy Robertson, Sen. Max Burns, Sen. Jason Anavitarte, Sen. John Albers, and Sen. Brian Strickland appearing on both lists. In the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, we also find that seven of the top-10 State Senators are also committee chairs.

Sen. Max Burns from District 23 (Sylvania) had the highest SLES for Senate Republicans in the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, with a score of 3.17. He introduced 20 bills, 19 received action in committee and action beyond committee, 18 passed the Senate, and 16 became law. Sen. Burns has been representing the 23<sup>rd</sup> District since 2021. Prior to his time in the Senate, he served in the House from 2003 to 2005. Outside of politics, he was a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, professor, consultant, and dean of the Mike Cottrell Business School at North Georgia College & State University in Dahlonega, Georgia.

#### **Highly Effective Democrat Lawmakers in the 157<sup>th</sup> State Senate**

##### **Top Ten List—Senate Democrats (157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly)**

	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>LES</u></b>	<b><u>Seniority</u></b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Emanuel Jones (District 10)</b>	1.22	10
<b>2.</b>	<b>Tonya Anderson (District 43)</b>	1.14	4
<b>3.</b>	<b>Kim Jackson (District 41)</b>	1.05	2
<b>4.</b>	<b>Jason Esteves (District 6)</b>	1.01	1
<b>5.</b>	<b>Elena Parent (District 42)</b>	0.84	5
<b>6.</b>	<b>Michael ‘Doc’ Rhett (District 33)</b>	0.70	5
<b>7.</b>	<b>Sonya Halpern (District 39)</b>	0.64	2
<b>8.</b>	<b>Sally Harrell (District 40)</b>	0.59	3
<b>9.</b>	<b>Nikki Merritt (District 9)</b>	0.56	2
<b>10.</b>	<b>Nabilah Islam Parkes (District 7)</b>	0.41	1

Among Democrats in the State Senate, Sen. Emanuel Jones from District 10 (Decatur) was ranked first in terms of his SLES score, with a score of 1.22. He was also among the top-10 Democratic highest scorers in the 156<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. He introduced 13 bills, 7 received action in committee, action beyond committee, passed, and became law. He has served in the 10<sup>th</sup> District since 2005. After graduating with a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from Columbia University, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Army Corps of Engineers. In January of 2025, he announced his campaign for Georgia’s 13<sup>th</sup> congressional district.

Five Senators on the list were also among the top-10 highest scoring Democrats in the 156<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. These Senators are Sen. Emanuel Jones, Sen. Sally Harrell, Sen. Tonya Anderson, Sen. Elena Parent, and Sen. Kim Jackson.

### **Lawmakers with Long-Standing Patterns of Exceeding Expectations**

Those who significantly exceed their benchmark score (which is calculated based on a legislators' seniority and status as a majority party member and/or committee chairperson) are identified as being in our "Exceeds Expectations" category. The lists below show those Representatives and Senators with the longest active streaks of exceeding expectations in consecutive sessions continuing through (and including) the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

#### **State Representatives with Longest Streak of "Exceeding Expectations" (through the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly)**

	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Streak</u></b>	<b><u>LES (in 157<sup>th</sup>)</u></b>	<b><u>Seniority</u></b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Rep. Sandra Scott (D-76)</b>	5 General Assemblies	1.99	7 General Assemblies
<b>2.</b>	<b>Rep. Patty Stinson (D-150)</b>	4 General Assemblies	2.35	6 General Assemblies
<b>3.</b>	<b>Rep. Clay Pirkle (R-169)</b>	4 General Assemblies	1.87	5 General Assemblies
<b>4.</b>	<b>Rep. Teri Anulewicz (D-42)</b>	3 General Assemblies	1.39	3 General Assemblies
<b>5.</b>	<b>Rep. Houston Gaines (R-120)</b>	3 General Assemblies	1.98	3 General Assemblies

State Representative Sandra Scott (D) from District 76 (Rex) tops our list with a 5-session streak of "Exceeds Expectations." In the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, she introduced 59 bills, 5 received action in committee, 5 received action beyond committee, 2 passed, and 1 became law. She has represented the 76<sup>th</sup> District since 2011. She earned her B.S. from Florida A&M University and joined the Army in 1984. After serving in the military, she earned her teaching license, and has been teaching ever since.

#### **State Senators with Longest Streak of "Exceeding Expectations" (through the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly)**

	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Streak</u></b>	<b><u>LES (in 157<sup>th</sup>)</u></b>	<b><u>Seniority</u></b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Sen. Emanuel Jones (D-10)</b>	7 General Assemblies	1.22	10 General Assemblies
<b>2.</b>	<b>Sen. Randy Robertson (R-29)</b>	3 General Assemblies	3.11	3 General Assemblies

Sen. Emanuel Jones had the longest streak of “Exceeding Expectations,” with a 7-session streak. As noted above, he was also ranked first among Senate Democrats in terms of SLES scores.

### High-Performing Freshmen

A useful way to identify lawmakers who might step into roles of greater influence is by examining first-term Representatives and Senators who received an “Exceeds Expectations” rating. These high-performing freshmen lawmakers offer insight into emerging legislative talent. Notably, the group is bipartisan, with strong performers coming from both the majority and minority parties.

#### Freshmen Representatives “Exceeding Expectations” (157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES (in 157<sup>th</sup>)</u>
1.	Rep. Matt Reeves (R-99)	4.62
2.	Rep. Scott Hilton (R-48)	2.58
3.	Rep. Omari Crawford (D-84)	1.12
4.	Rep. Karen Lupton (D-83)	1.04
5.	Rep. Doug Stoner (D-40)	0.69

Each lawmaker on this list successfully sponsored at least one bill that became law. All of these Representatives were reelected to the 158th General Assembly, with the exception of Rep. Doug Stoner, who chose not to seek reelection after redistricting placed him in a race against a fellow Democratic incumbent, Teri Anulewicz. Research on the U.S. Congress indicates that strong performance in a legislator’s first term is [closely linked to future legislative success and long-term influence](#). Given this trend, we expect many of these Representatives to continue to shape policy and help steer their parties’ legislative agendas in the years ahead.

#### Freshmen Senators “Exceeding Expectations” (157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>LES (in 157<sup>th</sup>)</u>
1.	Sen. Ricky Williams (R-25)	2.65
2.	Sen. Jason Esteves (D-6)	1.01

The top-performing freshman Republican was State Senator Ricky Williams, with a SLES score of 2.65—ranking him third among Republicans in the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. The top freshman Democrat, State Senator Jason Esteves, earned a score of 1.01, placing him fourth among Democratic lawmakers in the 157<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

### Conclusion

The 157th Georgia General Assembly 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. Additionally, several first-term and minority-party legislators exceeded expectations in their lawmaking effectiveness, highlighting emerging leadership and the value of strategic engagement despite structural disadvantages. These findings underscore the importance of institutional positions and experiences in shaping legislative outcomes in Georgia.