



NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INC.

NEWS RELEASE

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LEGISLATOR'S EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATED

Senate Majority Leader Kenneth C. Royall Jr. and House Speaker Liston B. Ramsey were rated the most effective legislators in the latest evaluation compiled by the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. Effectiveness ratings were released today for all 50 members of the N.C. Senate and 120 members of the House of Representatives for the current 1983-84 N.C. General Assembly.

The rankings were compiled from surveys evaluating legislators' effectiveness. The surveys were filled out by the legislators themselves, lobbyists, and capital news correspondents. The effectiveness rankings were obtained by averaging the raw scores for these three respondent groups.

The 10 Senators rated most effective were: (1) Kenneth C. Royall Jr. (D - Durham); (2) Harold W. Hardison (D - Lenoir); (3) Marshall A. Rauch (D - Gaston); (4) W. Craig Lawing (D - Mecklenburg); (5) Henson P. Barnes (D - Wayne); (6) Robert B. Jordan III (D - Montgomery); (7) a tie between William G. Hancock Jr. (D - Durham) and Joseph J. Harrington (D - Bertie); (9) Russell Walker (D - Randolph); and (10) Robert S. Swain (D - Buncombe).

The 10 members of the N.C. House of Representatives rated most effective were: (1) Liston B. Ramsey (D - Madison); (2) Allen Adams (D - Wake); (3) William T. Watkins (D - Granville); (4) George W. Miller Jr. (D - Durham); (5) H. Martin Lancaster (D - Wayne); (6) Dwight W. Quinn (D - Cabarrus); (7) H. Parks Helms (D - Mecklenburg); (8) Daniel T. Blue Jr. (D - Wake); (9) Daniel T. Lilley (D - Lenoir); (10) Ruth E. Cook (D - Wake). Cook has since resigned to accept an appointment by Governor Hunt to the N.C. Utilities Commission.

The effectiveness ratings are part of a larger publication called Article II: A Guide to the N.C. Legislature 1983-84, which will be released soon. This book contains biographical and voting information on each legislator. Also included are the following:

- business and home addresses;
- party affiliation, district number, counties represented, and number of terms
- occupation and education;
- committee appointments;
- bills introduced;
- individual votes on important bills in the 1983 session; and
- past effectiveness rankings.

Copies of Article II are available from the Center for \$6.00 each.

"We think the survey is a fair measure of a legislator's effectiveness in the General Assembly," said Ran Coble, executive director of the Center. "The people who did the ratings were the people who are best able to judge performance -- the legislators themselves, lobbyists, and capital news correspondents. We also hope it provides information that will be useful to the public in advance of the statewide primaries on May 8."

The legislators, lobbyists, and capital correspondents were asked to rate each legislator's effectiveness on the basis of participation in committee work, skill at guiding bills through floor debate, and general knowledge or expertise in special fields. The respondents were also asked to consider the respect the legislators command from their peers, the political power they hold, and their ability to sway the opinions of fellow legislators. "'Effectiveness' is a neutral concept," said Coble. "You can be 'effective conservative' or 'effective liberal.'"

The 1983-84 ratings mark the fourth time the Center has undertaken such an effort. The first edition in 1978 evaluated the performance of the 1977-78 General Assembly, the second edition rated members in the 1979-80 General Assembly, and the third, members of the 1981-82 legislature. The response rate to this most recent survey was the highest ever. Forty-three of the 50 Senators responded, as did 75 of 120 House members, 80 of 258 lobbyists, and 14 of 44 capital news correspondents.

The Center's release noted that first-term legislators and Republicans usually have lower effectiveness rankings. First-termers usually are less experienced and move up in the rankings over time, while Republicans are in a minority in both houses and thus receive no appointments to committee chairmanships.

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonprofit corporation created to examine the policies and practices of state government. It does not endorse candidates. The Center is supported in part by grants from the Z. Smith Reynolds and Mary Reynolds Babcock foundations, both in Winston-Salem. Other funding support comes from 25 corporate contributors and 700 individual and organizational members. The N.C. Center publishes a quarterly magazine called N.C. Insight and issues research reports, such as past studies on the tobacco industry, teacher certification, and the 1983-85 state budget.

For more information or to order a copy of Article II: A Guide to the N.C. Legislature 1983-84, call Beth Briggs at (919) 832-2839.