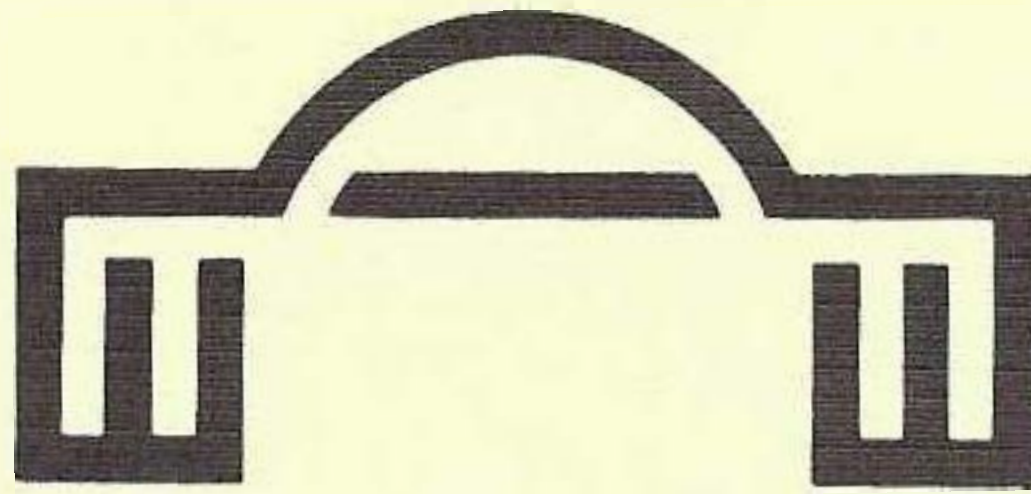




NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INC.

NEWS RELEASE

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LEGISLATORS' 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 rankings were released today for all 50 members of the N.C. Senate and 120 members of the House of Representatives for the current 1985-86 N.C. General Assembly.

The rankings were compiled from surveys evaluating legislators' effectiveness. The surveys were filled out by the legislators themselves, registered 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) Marshall A. Rauch (D - Gaston); (3) a tie between Anthony E. Rand (D - Cumberland) and Aaron W. Plyler (D - Union); (5) Harold W. Hardison (D - Lenoir); (6) Henson P. Barnes (D - Wayne); (7) Joseph J. Harrington (D - Bertie); (8) Ollie Harris (D - Cleveland); (9) Charles W. Hipps (D - Haywood); and (10) R. C. Soles Jr. (D - Columbus).

The 10 members of the N.C. House of Representatives rated most effective were: (1) Liston B. Ramsey (D - Madison); (2) William T. Watkins (D - Granville); (3) Bobby R. Etheridge (D - Harnett); (4) George W. Miller Jr. (D - Durham); (5) H. Martin Lancaster (D - Wayne); (6) Dwight W. Quinn (D - Cabarrus); (7) Daniel T. Blue Jr. (D - Wake); (8) Richard Wright (D - Columbus); (9) W. Paul Pulley (D - Durham); and (10) Joe Hackney (D - Orange).

Senator Royall has been ranked first in effectiveness in the Senate since the Center began the project in 1978. Royall serves as Senate Majority Leader. This is also the third consecutive session in which Rep. Liston Ramsey has been rated most effective in the House. In each year of the Center's effectiveness rankings, the Speaker of the House has topped the list in the House -- first Carl Stewart (1977-79), and then Ramsey (1981-85).

The effectiveness rankings are published as a supplement to a larger publication called Article II: A Guide to the N.C. Legislature, which is released every other year. 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 past session; and
- past effectiveness rankings.

Chairing a major money committee seemed to guarantee a legislator a ranking in the top four or five of his chamber. "That's the golden rule," one legislator explained. "Him who's got the gold, he gets to make the rules, and that's what I'd call effectiveness."

"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 state-wide primaries on May 6."

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 an 'effective conservative' or an 'effective liberal.'"

The 1985-86 ratings mark the fifth 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, the third edition rated members of the 1981-82 legislature, and the fourth, members of the 1983-84 General Assembly. The response rate to this most recent survey was the highest ever. Eighty-three of the 120 House members responded, as did 34 of the 50 Senators, 127 of 311 registered lobbyists, and 21 of 39 capital news correspondents. Thus the overall rate of response was 51%, which is far above standards of statistical reliability.

The Center's release noted that first-term legislators and Republicans usually have lower effectiveness rankings. First timers usually are less experienced and move up in the rankings over time. For example, House members who had served one full previous term moved up an average of 30 notches this year, while second-term Senators moved up an average of 10 slots in the rankings. Republicans are in a minority in both houses and thus receive no appointments to committee chairmanships. However, with increased numbers of Republicans in the legislature in 1985, most Republicans with legislative service prior to the 1985 session moved up in this year's rankings.

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation created to examine state government policies and practices. 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 comes from 79 corporate contributors and 600 individual and organizational members. The N.C. Center publishes a quarterly magazine called North Carolina Insight and issues research reports. Past studies have been published on all the boards and commissions in the executive branch of state government, teacher certification, and regulation of credit insurance. The Center has also published a guide to all the foundations and corporate giving programs in North Carolina.

For more information, call Ran Coble at (919) 832-2839. Copies of Article II: A Guide to the N.C. Legislature 1985-86 and the supplement containing the new effectiveness rankings are available from the Center for \$10.00 a set, plus \$1.00 postage and handling if mailed. Write the Center at P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602.