



**NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
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NEWS RELEASE

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NEW LEGISLATIVE EFFECTIVENESS RANKINGS: MANY MOVING OUT, MOVING UP

The General Assembly is losing more of its most effective members after the 1991-1992 session than at any other time in the last 15 years, says the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. The Center released effectiveness rankings today for all 50 members of the N.C. Senate and all 120 members of the House of Representatives for the current 1991-92 N.C. General Assembly. Three of the ten most effective senators -- Henson P. Barnes (D-Wayne), Kenneth C. Royall Jr. (D-Durham), and William D. Goldston (D-Rockingham) -- are retiring from the legislature. Four of the ten most effective members of the House of Representatives -- Dennis A. Wicker (D-Lee), Harry E. Payne Jr. (D-New Hanover), H.M. "Mickey" Michaux Jr. (D-Durham), and R. Samuel Hunt III (D-Alamance) -- are either retiring or leaving to run for other state offices.

"There are different reasons for the turnover in the two chambers," says Ran Coble, executive director of the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. "In the Senate, the Old Guard is retiring and giving way to the Young Turks. In the House, many of those leaving have ambitions for higher office -- whether it be Congress or the Council of State or the cozier confines of the state Senate."

The 1991-92 effectiveness rankings also mark the return of the Speaker of the House to his traditional #1 ranking. In 1989-90, a rank-and-file member of the House -- David H. Diamont (D-Surry) was named the most effective representative for the first time. This year, Speaker Daniel T. Blue Jr. (D-Wake) was ranked first, and Diamont (co-chairman of the Appropriations Committee) ranked second. In the Senate, on the other hand, retiring Senator Kenneth Royall's grip on the #1 ranking since 1978 was finally broken by President Pro Tempore Henson Barnes, who is also retiring. Royall's ranking slipped to 4th.

For the second session in a row, there were wholesale shifts in the effectiveness rankings in the House. This reflects the importance of who holds the Speaker's post, says the Center's Coble. "Dan Blue's ascendancy to the Speaker's office was a sea change in many members' effectiveness. For those Democrats who rode in on the same tide, they got committee chairmanships and their effectiveness went up. For

many Republicans who had supported former Speaker Joe Mavretic, their tide was going out. And for Blue's fellow African-American lawmakers, the rising tide lifted their boats," says Coble.

Republicans made large gains in effectiveness in the House during the 1989-90 session under a bipartisan coalition that put former Speaker Josephus L. Mavretic in power. But in 1991-92, they fell back some. For the second year in a row, the highest-ranking Republican in the House is Minority Leader Johnathan L. Rhyne Jr. (R-Lincoln), who fell from 4th in the 1989-90 session to 14th in 1991-92. Other high-ranking Republicans in the House include James Arthur "Art" Pope (R-Wake) at 18th (up from 64th) and Coy C. Privette (R-Cabarrus) at 30th, down from 28th. In the Senate, the highest-ranking Republican is Betsy L. Cochrane (R-Davie) at 19th, up from 24th.

In addition to Blue and Diamont, the eight other members of the N.C. House of Representatives rated most effective were: (3) George W. Miller Jr. (D-Durham); (4) Martin L. Nesbitt Jr. (D-Buncombe); (5) Joe Hackney (D-Orange); (6) Dennis A. Wicker (D-Lee); (7) Harry E. Payne Jr. (D-New Hanover); (8) Milton F. "Toby" Fitch Jr. (D-Wilson); (9) H.M. "Mickey" Michaux Jr. (D-Durham); and (10) R. Samuel Hunt III (D-Alamance). Among the top 10, Fitch, who was co-chairman of the Redistricting Committees, moved up the most -- from 23rd to 8th.

The 10 Senators rated most effective were: (1) Henson P. Barnes (D-Wayne); (2) Marc Basnight (D-Dare); (3) George B. Daniel (D-Caswell); (4) Kenneth C. Royall Jr. (D-Durham); (5) Dennis J. Winner (D-Buncombe); (6) Aaron W. Plyler Sr. (D-Union); (7) R.C. Soles Jr. (D-Columbus); (8) Alexander P. Sands III (D-Rockingham); (9) Marvin M. Ward (D-Forsyth); and William D. Goldston (D-Rockingham). Sands, chairman of the Judiciary II Committee, made his first appearance in the top 10, moving from 20th in the 1989-90 rankings to 8th in the current session.

Turnover in the General Assembly will be higher than usual next year. Regardless of the outcome of elections in November, more than a fifth of the legislature will not be back next session. Altogether, 11 of the 50 senators did not file for re-election to the Senate, and 28 of the 120 representatives chose not to return to the House.

Some of the turnover can be attributed to redistricting of both legislative and Congressional seats. Sen. N. Leo Daughtry (R-Johnston), for example, is making the unusual move of leaving the Senate to run for a seat in the N.C. House. Meanwhile, moving in the other direction are Reps. Johnathan L. Rhyne Jr. (R-Lincoln), John H. Kerr III (D-Wayne), and William H. Lewis (R-Wilson) -- all of whom are leaving the House to run for the N.C. Senate. Sen. B. Tommy Pollard (R-Onslow) and Reps. H.M. "Mickey" Michaux (D-Durham), Thomas C. Hardaway (D-Halifax), Walter B. Jones Jr. (D-Pitt), Coy C. Privette (R-Cabarrus), and Donald M. Dawkins (D-Richmond) are running for Congressional seats. Others -- including Reps. J. Vernon Abernethy (R-Gaston), James W. Crawford Jr. (D-Granville), Doris R. Huffman

(R-Catawba), Harry E. Payne Jr. (D-New Hanover), James A. "Art" Pope (R-Wake), and Dennis A. Wicker (D-Lee) -- are running for Council of State offices. Crawford, Huffman, Pope, and Wicker are running for Lieutenant Governor. Payne is running for Commissioner of Labor and Abernethy for State Auditor.

"The legislature is going to see a real change in membership during the next session," says Coble. "With so many high-ranking legislators already leaving -- plus the turnover to come from those who don't win re-election -- there will be plenty of opportunities for new people to move into leadership positions. My guess is that the Senate will change the most in 1993."

The Center's rankings are based on surveys completed by legislators themselves, by registered lobbyists based in North Carolina who regularly work in the General Assembly, and by capital news correspondents who cover the legislature every day. These three groups 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 other legislators.

The 1991-92 ratings mark the eighth time the Center has conducted this comprehensive survey. The first edition in 1978 evaluated the performance of the 1977-78 General Assembly. The response rate to this most recent survey was among the highest ever. Ninety-seven of the 120 House members (81%) responded, as did 43 of the 50 Senators (86%), 134 of 274 registered lobbyists based in North Carolina (49%), and 20 of 31 capital news correspondents (68%). Thus, the overall rate of response was 62%, which is far above standards of statistical reliability.

"Evidently, legislators' confidence in this survey continues to grow steadily," notes Coble. "Even though changes this session were much less radical than in the previous one, especially in the House, respondents were still eager to give their opinions of their fellow members. The response rates for the other groups surveyed continued to climb as well. We think this illustrates a strong belief that the survey is a valid measure of legislative effectiveness."

The Center noted that first-term legislators and members of the minority party -- in this case Republicans -- usually have lower effectiveness rankings. First-timers are less experienced in the legislative process but usually move up in the rankings over time. For example, House members who had served one full previous term moved up an average of 19 notches this year, while second-term Senators moved up an average of eight places in the rankings.

Longevity of service was a key factor in obtaining a high ranking, whether Democrat or Republican. Of the legislators ranked in the bottom 25 in the 120-member House, only six had served more than one prior term. In the 50-member Senate, only two of the Senators ranked in the bottom 10 had served more than one prior term in the Senate.

The legislators who moved up the most in the rankings in the House included both Democrats and Republicans. They were: Reps. Margaret "Peggy" Stamey (D-Wake), Howard J. Hunter Jr. (D-Northampton), Edward C. Bowen (D-Sampson), James A. "Art" Pope (R-Wake), David T. Flaherty Jr. (R-Caldwell), and Luther R. "Nick" Jeralds (D-Cumberland). The Senators moving up the most in the rankings were all Democrats -- T.L. "Fountain" Odom (D-Mecklenburg), Alexander P. "Sandy" Sands III (D-Rockingham), and Wendell H. Murphy (D-Duplin). However, almost all of the legislators in the Senate and the House who lost the most ground in effectiveness were Democrats.

The highest-ranking freshmen legislators in the House were Karen E. Gottovi (D-New Hanover); John R. Gamble Jr. (D-Lincoln), who returned to the House after a five-term absence; and Paul Luebke (D-Durham). The highest-ranking freshmen in the Senate were Herbert L. Hyde (D-Buncombe), who had served in the Senate in 1965 and two terms in the House in the 1970s, and Howard N. Lee (D-Orange). Both Hyde and Lee were appointed to fill vacancies in the Senate at the end of the 1989-90 session; this was their first full term.

The highest-ranking women in the House were Anne C. Barnes (D-Orange) at 13th and Marie W. Colton (D-Buncombe) at 14th. Peggy Stamey (D-Wake) followed at 25th. In the Senate, Helen Rhyne Marvin (D-Gaston) was the highest-ranked woman at 17th, followed by Betsy L. Cochran (R-Davie) at 19th, Beverly M. Perdue (D-Craven) at 20th, and Lura S. Tally (D-Cumberland) at 22nd.

With an African-American (Dan Blue) as Speaker and in a position to appoint committee chairs, black members of the General Assembly made significant advances. In the House, Milton F. "Toby" Fitch Jr. ranked 8th, H.M. "Mickey" Michaux Jr. was 9th, and Thomas C. Hardaway 21st. By contrast, in the Senate, Howard N. Lee (D-Orange) was the highest-ranking black member at 18th, followed by William N. Martin (D-Guilford) at 25th.

The effectiveness rankings are published as a supplement to a larger publication called Article II: A Guide to the 1991-92 N.C. Legislature, which was released in 1991. This book contains the following biographical and voting information on each legislator:

- business and home addresses and phone numbers;
- office room number and phone number at the legislature;
- party affiliation, district number, and counties represented;
- number of terms served;
- committee assignments;
- the number of bills sponsored and enacted into law in the 1989-90 session;
- individual votes on important bills in the 1989-90 session;
- occupation and education; and
- past effectiveness rankings (1979-1989).

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation created to study public policy issues facing North Carolina and to evaluate state government programs. 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 six other private foundations, 118 corporate contributors, and more than 740 individual and organizational members. The N.C. Center publishes a quarterly magazine called North Carolina Insight and issues book-length research reports. It has also conducted studies on barriers to voting, campaign finance, access to health care, and how the UNC system identifies and rewards good teaching.

Copies of Article II: A Guide to the 1991-92 N.C. Legislature and the supplement containing the **new effectiveness rankings** are available from the Center for \$25.44 a set, plus \$2.00 postage and handling if mailed. Write the N.C. Center at P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602 or call (919) 832-2839.

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For more information about the legislative effectiveness rankings, call Ran Coble or Kim Kebschull at the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research at (919) 832-2839.