



**NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
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NEWS RELEASE

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**WOMEN AND BLACKS RANK HIGHEST EVER IN LEGISLATIVE
EFFECTIVENESS RANKINGS**

Women and blacks are serving in record numbers in the N.C. General Assembly while exerting more influence than ever before, according to the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. The Center released its biennial legislative effectiveness rankings today for all 50 members of the Senate and all 120 members of the House of Representatives for the current 1993-94 N.C. General Assembly. A record number of women (31) and blacks (25) served during the 1993 session. Female and African-American legislators achieved their highest rankings ever in both the Senate and House.

"The legislature's 'good ol' boys club' has finally opened its doors to women and African-Americans," says Ran Coble, the Center's executive director. "And, as their numbers and longevity have increased, their legislative effectiveness has too."

Sen. Beverly Perdue (D-Craven) was ranked 12th most effective in the Senate, and Rep. Anne C. Barnes (D-Orange) was ranked eighth most effective in the House. Sen. Perdue is in her second Senate term, having served two previous terms in the House. She is chair of the Education/Higher Education Committee and one of five vice-chairs of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. Rep. Barnes, serving her sixth full House term, is Chair of the House Education Committee. No woman has ever ranked above 16th in the Senate or 10th in the House since the Center began publishing the legislative effectiveness rankings in 1978.

Other notable showings by women in this year's rankings are the two highest-ranking first-term Senators, Leslie J. Winner (D-Mecklenburg) and Elaine F. Marshall (D-Harnett). Senators Winner and Marshall ranked 21st and 22nd, respectively. In the House, four women ranked in the top 20 -- Rep. Barnes at 8th; Ruth M. Easterling (D-Mecklenburg) at 16th; Speaker Pro Tempore Marie W. Colton (D-Buncombe) at 18th; and Karen E. Gottovi (D-New Hanover), now in her second term, at 20th. Rep. Carolyn Russell (R-Wayne), also in her second term, tied for the biggest gain in effectiveness in the House. She moved up to 45th from a tie for 97th place.

The 1993 session also marked the highest number of African-Americans (25) serving in the General Assembly, and this increase was accompanied by greater effectiveness. In the House, Speaker Daniel T. Blue Jr. (D-Wake) maintained his first place ranking, and both Milton F. "Toby" Fitch Jr. (D-Wilson) and H. M. "Mickey" Michaux Jr. (D-Durham) moved into the top 10, ranking 5th and 7th, respectively. In the Senate, Howard N. Lee (D-Orange) broke into the top 10 at 9th,

up from 18th in 1991. No other black senator has ever ranked that highly. The senator making the largest gain in effectiveness is also African-American, Frank W. Ballance Jr. (D-Warren), who moved up from 37th to 11th.

"Almost every black legislator gained in this year's rankings," notes Coble. "Single-member districts are helping African-Americans build up longevity, and the Speaker of the House is giving blacks important leadership roles. These two trends lead to a third -- increased effectiveness, especially in the House."

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 specific fields. The respondents also were 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.

Many high-ranking legislators left after the 1991-92 session, which led to changes in both the House and Senate. In the Senate, three of the 10 most effective members in 1991 did not return, and half of the new top 10 are there for the first time. Among the top 10, Sen. Roy A. Cooper III (D-Nash), who chairs the Judiciary II Committee, moved up the most, from a tie for 23rd in the 1991-92 rankings to 6th in the current session.

The House of Representatives also lost three of its most effective members after 1991-92 session, with three new faces making it into the top 10. Two of those "new" faces belong to veterans making comebacks -- former Speaker Liston Ramsey (D-Madison) and Rules Committee Chair John J. "Jack" Hunt (D-Cleveland). Both had been in the top 10 in 1987. The third newcomer in the House top 10 is Rep. Anne Barnes.

The 10 Senators rated most effective are: (1) Marc Basnight (D-Dare); (2) George B. Daniel (D-Caswell); (3) Aaron W. Plyler Sr. (D-Union); (4) A. P. "Sandy" Sands III (D-Rockingham); (5) Dennis J. Winner (D-Buncombe); (6) Roy A. Cooper III (D-Nash); (7) J. Richard Conder (D-Richmond); (8) Herbert L. Hyde (D-Buncombe); (9) Howard N. Lee (D-Orange); and (10) T. L. "Fountain" Odom (D-Mecklenburg).

In the N.C. House, the 10 most effective representatives are: (1) Daniel T. Blue Jr. (D-Wake); (2) Martin L. Nesbitt Jr. (D-Buncombe); (3) George W. Miller Jr. (D-Durham); (4) Joe Hackney (D-Orange); (5) Milton F. "Toby" Fitch Jr. (D-Wilson); (6) David H. Diamont (D-Surry); (7) H. M. "Mickey" Michaux Jr. (D-Durham); (8) Anne C. Barnes (D-Orange); (9) Liston B. Ramsey (D-Madison); and (10) John J. "Jack" Hunt (D-Cleveland).

Longevity of service was a key factor in obtaining a higher ranking in both the Senate and the House. The Center notes that **senators who had served one full previous term moved up an average of 9 notches this year, while second-term representatives moved up an average of 30 places in the rankings.** Returning Democrats in the House moved up an average of 14 places, and returning Republicans moved up an average of 18 places.

Members of the minority party -- in this case Republicans -- usually have lower effectiveness rankings. But this year, the two members of the House who gained the most in the rankings (52 places) were both Republicans. Representatives David Balmer (R-Mecklenburg) ranked 33rd after the 1993 session, up from 85th, and Carolyn Russell (R-Wayne) ranked 45th this time, up from 97th.

Also making large gains in the House were: Majority Whip James Black (D-Mecklenburg, up 51 places), Robert Hensley (D-Wake, up 46), Margaret Jeffus (D-Guilford, up 44), and William Wainwright (D-Craven, up 42). In the Senate, those who made the biggest gains are all Democrats: Frank W. Ballance Jr. (D-Warren, up 26 places), Roy A. Cooper III (D-Nash, up 17), and Clark Plexico (D-Henderson, up 16).

The highest-ranking freshmen legislators in the House were Philip Baddour (D-Wayne, tied for 25th); Richard Moore (D-Vance, at 40th), who is leaving to run for Congress; and Brad Miller (D-Wake, at 41st). The highest-ranking first-term Senators were Leslie Winner (D-Mecklenburg) and Elaine F. Marshall (D-Harnett), at 21st and 22nd, respectively.

The 1993-94 ratings mark the ninth time the Center has undertaken such an effort. The first edition in 1978 evaluated the performance of the 1977 General Assembly. The response rate to this most recent survey continued to be very high. Eighty-six of 119 House members (72%) responded (Rep. Raymond C. "Pete" Thompson died in April 1993, and his replacement was not named until after the 1993 session), as did 44 of the 50 Senators (88%), 168 of 350 legislative liaisons and registered lobbyists based in North Carolina (48%), and 17 of 33 capital news correspondents (52%). Thus, the overall rate of response was 57%, which is well above standards of statistical reliability.

"Confidence in this survey continues to be high," says Coble. "Traditionally, legislators themselves have the highest response rate, and the same was true this time. A record number of Senators responded, and the overall response rate reflects a strong belief that the survey is a valid measure of legislative effectiveness."

Center director Coble notes that 26 of the 170 members elected to the 1993 General Assembly will not return to the legislature next year, so the legislature's power structure will continue to change. He says, "Some have taken other state jobs, some are running for higher office, and some have chosen not to run for re-election."

By the end of the 1993 session, three House members and one Senator had resigned their seats. Rep. Peggy Stamey (D-Wake) was appointed to the state Paroles Commission, and Rep. Peggy Wilson (R-Rockingham) left the General Assembly when she moved to Alaska. Rep. Judy Hunt (D-Watauga) and Sen. Ralph A. Hunt (D-Durham) were appointed to the N.C. Utilities Commission. In January 1994, Rep. Dan DeVane (D-Hoke) resigned to take a post as lobbyist for the N.C. Dept. of Transportation. Two members of the General Assembly died during the February-March 1994 special legislative session on crime -- Sen. John Codington (R-New Hanover) and Rep. Herman C. Gist (D-Guilford) -- and Rep. Pete Thompson died during the 1993 session.

At least four members of the General Assembly will not be returning in 1995 because they are running for a Congressional seat: Sen. A.P. "Sandy" Sands (D-Rockingham), House Minority Leader David G. Balmer (R-Mecklenburg), Rep. Bobby Ray Hall (D-Lee), and Rep. Richard H. Moore (D-Vance).

Also retiring from the Senate are: J. Ollie Harris (D-Cleveland), Joseph E. Johnson (D-Wake), James F. "Jim" Richardson (D-Mecklenburg), Mary P. Seymour (D-Guilford), Lura S. Tally (D-Cumberland), and Russell G. Walker (D-Randolph). Other retiring House members include: Rep. Howard C. Barnhill (D-Mecklenburg), Speaker Pro Tempore Marie W. Colton (D-Buncombe), co-chair of the Appropriations Committee David H. Diamont (D-Surry), David Flaherty Jr. (R-Caldwell), Aaron E. Fussell Sr. (D-Wake), Vernon G. James (D-Pasquotank), Annie Brown Kennedy (D-Forsyth), and C.P. Stewart (D-Harnett).

The effectiveness rankings are published as a supplement to Article II: A Guide to the 1993-94 N.C. Legislature, which was released in 1993. This book contains the following biographical and voting information for each legislator:

- business and home addresses and telephone 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 1991-92 session;
- individual votes on important bills in the 1991-92 session;
- occupation and education; and
- past effectiveness rankings (1981-1991).

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. Additional funding comes from six private foundations, 125 corporate contributors, and more than 875 individual and organizational members. The N.C. Center publishes a quarterly magazine called North Carolina Insight and issues book-length research reports. Recent studies have been conducted on how the state's public universities evaluate and reward excellent teaching, ways to increase voter participation, and campaign finance.

Copies of Article II: A Guide to the 1993-94 N.C. Legislature and the supplement containing the **new effectiveness rankings** are available from the Center for \$8.50 a set. Write the 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 Marianne Kersey at the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research at (919) 832-2839.