



NEWS RELEASE

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Some of Most Effective Legislators in Both Parties Won't Be Back, Says N.C. Policy Center

With a supermajority of more than 60 percent in the state legislature, Republicans dominate the top spots in the new rankings of legislators' effectiveness released today by the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. President Pro Tem of the Senate Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) and Speaker of the House Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) rank first in their respective houses. But, some of the most effective legislators in both parties will not be back in 2017.

The biennial effectiveness rankings are based on responses to surveys from the legislators themselves, from registered lobbyists based in North Carolina, and capital news media who regularly cover state government. The Center also released new rankings of legislators' attendance and participation in roll call votes.

"The effectiveness rankings tell citizens how those who most closely work with and in the General Assembly view a legislator's effectiveness during the session," says executive director Nancy Richmond Rose. "Over the years," she adds, "the key factors in a higher effectiveness ranking are being in the majority party, how many terms a legislator has served, being chair of a committee, and their personal skills in moving legislation."

Some of the Most Effective Legislators Will Not Return in 2017

Turnover continues in the legislature this year, even before the fall 2016 elections are held. At least 25 legislators who started the 2015 session will not be back in 2017. This includes some of the most effective members in both parties in both the Senate and the House.

Seven Senators – six Republicans and one Democrat – will not return in 2017. All six Republicans rank in the top half of the Senate rankings. These include retiring seven-term Senator and Rules Committee Chair Tom Apodaca (R-Henderson), who ranks 2nd in effectiveness, and 8.5-term Redistricting Committee Chair Sen. Bob Rucho (R-Mecklenburg), who ranks 5th. Also retiring from the Senate are 13-term Sen. Fletcher Hartsell (R-Cabarrus), who serves as Program Evaluation Committee Co-Chair and ranks 15th; eight-term Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety Co-Chair Stan Bingham (R-Davidson), who ranks 23rd; and three-term Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education Co-Chair Senator Dan Soucek (R-Watauga), who ranks 24th. Senate Judiciary I Committee Co-Chair Buck Newton (R-Wilson), who ranks 12th, and Sen. Josh Stein (D-Wake), who ranks 30th and recently resigned, are not returning because they both are running statewide for Attorney General.

Eighteen Representatives, 10 of whom rank in the top half in effectiveness, also will not return to the House in 2017 – 12 Republicans, 5 Democrats, and one Unaffiliated. The highest-ranked Republicans who won't be back are Speaker Pro Tempore Skip Stam (R-Wake), ranked 4th; 14-term Judiciary I Committee Chair Rep. Leo Daughtry (R-Johnston) at 6th; and Appropriations Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources Co-Chair Roger West (R-Cherokee) at 18th.

The top-ranked Democrat in the House and Ethics Committee Co-Chair, Rick Glazier (D-Cumberland), ranks 13th. Glazier resigned in August 2015 near the end of the session. And, the highest-ranked freshman in the House, Dan Bishop (R-Mecklenburg) at 55th, also will not be returning to the House in 2017 as he is making a bid for the state Senate.

Other House Committee Chairs who will not return are Agriculture Committee Co-Chair James H. Langdon, Jr. (R-Johnston), who ranks 41st; Appropriations Committee on Transportation Co-Chair Paul Tine (U-Dare) at 44th;

Environment Committee Co-Chair Rick Catlin (R-New Hanover) at 47th; Homeland Security, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee Co-Chair Chris Whitmire (R-Transylvania) at 52nd; Judiciary IV Committee Co-Chair Jacqueline Schaffer (R-Mecklenburg) at 61st; and Appropriations Committee on General Government Co-Chair Rayne Brown (R-Davidson) at 63rd. Appropriations Committee on Education Co-Chair Bryan Holloway (R-Stokes), who ranks 48th, and Education-Universities Committee Co-Chair Brian Brown (R-Pitt) at 64th, both resigned in October 2015.

At least two more legislators may not return if they win their bids for Congress. Four legislators – Representatives John Blust (R-Guilford), Julia Howard (R-Davie), and Harry Warren (R-Rowan), and Senator Andrew Brock (R-Davie) – are running for the 13th Congressional District seat. Three more – Representatives Tricia Cotham (D-Mecklenburg), Carla Cunningham (D-Mecklenburg), and Rodney Moore (D-Mecklenburg) – are running for the 12th Congressional District seat. All but Cotham are also running for re-election to the legislature. If any of them wins a seat in Congress, they will have to give up their state legislative seat.

Second-Term Republicans, One Democrat Make Big Gains in Effectiveness

Republicans who were first elected in 2012 and who are serving their second term in 2015-2016 made big gains in the effectiveness rankings this year. Sen. Chad Barefoot (R-Wake) rose 19 places from 37th in 2014 to 18th this year. Sen. Trudy Wade (R-Guilford) moved up 14 places to 17th, and Sen. Tamara Barringer (R-Wake) moved up 12 places to 14th.

In the House, 10 members moved up 30 or more places in effectiveness. Rep. Donny Lambeth (R-Forsyth) jumped 59 places from 69th in 2014 to 10th this year. Rep. Josh Dobson (R-McDowell) moved up 49 places to 34th, and Rep. Steve Ross (R-Alamance) moved up 48 places to 30th. One Democrat, three-term Rep. Ken Goodman (D-Richmond), moved up 34 spaces to 32nd.

Highly Ranked, Regardless of Whether Their Party Is in Power

Over the years, some legislators have consistently ranked highly in effectiveness, regardless of whether their political party was in the majority or minority. Democrats held a majority in three sessions in the last 12 years, while Republicans have had a majority since 2011 and a supermajority this session.

Sen. Fletcher Hartsell (R-Cabarrus), who ranks 15th this year, has ranked in the top 20 in every survey since 1995. In the House, Rep. Rick Glazier (D-Cumberland), who ranks 13th this year, has ranked in the top 25 since 2005. And, Rep. Paul Stam (R-Wake), who ranks 4th this year, has ranked in the top 10 since 2007. None will be returning in 2017.

Most Effective Freshmen

Among Senators who were new to the legislature in 2015, Sen. Tom McKinnis (R-Richmond) ranks as the most effective freshman at 37th this year, followed by Sen. John Alexander (R-Wake) at 40th. In the House, Rep. Dan Bishop (R-Mecklenburg) and Rep. John Bradford (R-Mecklenburg) are the highest-ranked freshmen at 55th and 57th, respectively.

Most Effective Females and African Americans

The highest ranked female in the Senate is Sen. Kathy Harrington (R-Gaston) at 8th. Sen. Tamara Barringer (R-Wake) moved up 12 places to 14th, and Sen. Trudy Wade (R-Guilford) rose 14 spots to 17th.

Three women are in the top 20 in effectiveness in the House. Rep. Linda Johnson (R-Cabarrus) is the highest-ranked female in the House at 11th, followed by Rep. Marilyn Avila (R-Wake) at 17th, and Rep. Pat McElraft (R-Carteret) at 20th.

Sen. Dan Blue (D-Wake) at 22nd and Rep. Larry Hall (D-Durham) at 45th are the top-ranked African American legislators in the Senate and House, respectively.

Legislators with Perfect Attendance

This marks the eighth time the Center has tabulated rankings of attendance and roll call voting participation, using official records from the N.C. General Assembly. Eight Senators had perfect attendance: Ben Clark (D-Hoke), Don Davis (D-Greene), Joyce Krawiec (R-Forsyth), Shirley Randleman (R-Wilkes), Norman Sanderson (R-Pamlico), Jeff Tarte (R-Mecklenburg), Joyce Waddell (D-Mecklenburg), and Trudy Wade (R-Guilford).

In the House, 10 members had 100 percent attendance. Rep. Nelson Dollar (R-Wake) had perfect attendance for the fourth consecutive session. The other Representatives with perfect attendance are John Blust (R-Guilford), Jamie Boles (R-Moore), Mark Brody (R-Union), Elmer Floyd (D-Cumberland), George Graham (D-Lenoir), Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland), Michele Presnell (R-Yancey), Brian Turner (D-Buncombe), and 85-year-old Mickey Michaux (D-Durham), who has only missed one day during the past seven sessions.

The Center praised the dedication of most legislators in attending the sessions last year. Forty-three of 50 Senators and 103 of 120 Representatives attended more than 90 percent of the days in session. Center director Nancy Rose says, "Many of these legislators have jobs back home and drive long distances to attend sessions in Raleigh. For our part-time legislature, this attendance record is a significant accomplishment."

Legislators with Perfect Roll Call Voting Participation

The Senate had 764 electronically recorded roll call votes in the 2015 session. Six Senators voted in all 764 roll call votes – Sen. Ben Clark (D-Hoke), Sen. Don Davis (D-Greene), Sen. Shirley Randleman (R-Wilkes), Sen. Norman Sanderson (R-Pamlico), Sen. Jeff Tarte (R-Mecklenburg), and Sen. Trudy Wade (R-Guilford). Twelve other Senators had voting participation percentages of 100% after accounting for excused absences. All 50 Senators included in the rankings had voting participation percentages over 96 percent.

Only one Representative voted in all 1,099 electronically recorded roll call votes with no absences or excuses from voting – Rep. Nelson Dollar (R-Wake). Dollar has participated in every vote for six consecutive sessions. Five other Representatives had 100% voting participation, after accounting for excused absences – Rep. Susan Fisher (D-Buncombe), Rep. Pricey Harrison (D-Guilford), Rep. Allen McNeill (R-Randolph), Rep. Rena Turner (R-Iredell), and Rep. Michael Wray (D-Northampton).

All but one Representative, Speaker of the House Tim Moore (R-Cleveland), had voting participation percentages over 90 percent. Historically, the Speaker of the House has voted only to break ties or when he deems it necessary, which is reflected by a lower roll call voting participation percentage. Speaker Moore voted 713 times in 2015 (64.9 percent). Former Speaker Joe Hackney voted 49 times in 2009-2010, and former Speaker Thom Tillis voted 159 times in 2013.

Five Different Measures of Legislators' Performance

In odd-numbered years, the Center publishes additional evaluations of legislative performance. The Center's *Citizen's Guide to the 2015-2016 Legislature* includes data on how many bills each legislator introduced and how many of those bills he or she got passed. The guide also includes all members' votes on what legislators said were the 12 most important bills of the session. The Center publishes a total of five different measures of legislators' performance: effectiveness, attendance, voting participation, success in getting bills passed, and votes on the most significant bills of the session. Citizens can use these multiple ratings and data to determine how well their legislators perform.

Center director Rose says that the N.C. Center compiles the three sets of rankings released today to give citizens different ways to evaluate the performance of their legislators. "The rankings of attendance and voting participation tell citizens how often their legislator was there to represent them," she says. "The effectiveness rankings tell citizens how effective their legislator was when he or she was there."

How the Effectiveness Rankings Are Done

The Center's effectiveness rankings are based on surveys completed by the legislators themselves, by registered lobbyists who are based in North Carolina and who regularly work in the General Assembly, and by capital news

reporters. These three groups are asked to rate each legislator's effectiveness on the basis of participation in committee work, skill at guiding bills through committees and in floor debates, and general knowledge or expertise in specific fields. The survey respondents also are asked to consider the respect that legislators command from their peers, as well as his or her ethics, the political power they hold (by virtue of office, longevity, or personal skills), their ability to sway the opinions of fellow legislators, and their aptitude for the overall legislative process.

This year's rankings mark the 20th time the Center has undertaken this comprehensive survey. The first edition evaluated the performance of the 1977-78 General Assembly. The response rate to the survey continues to be very high. Seventy-five of the 120 House members (63 percent) responded to the Center's survey, as did 27 of the 50 Senators (54 percent), 160 of the 382 lobbyists and lead legislative liaisons based in North Carolina (42 percent), and 7 of 32 capital news correspondents (22 percent) – all well above accepted standards of statistical validity. The overall response rate was 46 percent, an increase from 40% in 2014, 2012, and 2010.

National Praise for the Center's Rankings

Several states – including Arkansas, California, Florida, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington – have ranked the effectiveness of their legislators using different methods. California has ranked legislators in terms of effectiveness, integrity, energy, and even intelligence. "It is hard to deny that the ratings, when done responsibly, serve a legitimate public purpose," said a report about state legislative rankings in *Governing* magazine, published by Congressional Quarterly, Inc. "The ratings issued by the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research are perhaps the most straightforward and most widely respected."

Another independent review of state rankings reached the same conclusion. "Most attempts at reputational rankings of state legislators don't deserve much credibility because of three problems: (1) no precise definition of who is being polled, (2) a low response rate among those polled because legislators and lobbyists don't want to risk getting caught making statements suggesting people they work with are ineffective, or (3) definitions of effectiveness that equate effectiveness with helping to enact an interest group's agenda," said *State Policy Reports*. "Over the years, *Reports* has seen many of these ... that fail one or another of these tests. The exception is the rankings that have been done since 1978 by the North Carolina Center."

About the Center

The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization created in 1977 to evaluate state government programs and study important public policy issues facing North Carolina. The Center does *not* endorse candidates. The Center is supported by grants from private foundations, corporate contributors, and individual and organizational members. The Center publishes an online journal called *North Carolina Insight* and in-depth research reports. Recent studies examined telepsychiatry as a way to deliver mental health services, issues affecting the aging population in NC, state tuition and financial aid policy in public universities, ways to increase NC's college-going and college completion rates, and Alzheimer's Disease in NC.

Copies of the new legislative effectiveness rankings are available from the Center's website at www.nccppr.org and on its journal website at <http://ncinsight.nccppr.org>. The rankings also will be included in the Center's *Citizen's Guide to the Legislature* app. The *Guide* contains profiles and photos of each of the 170 members of the General Assembly; business and home addresses; email, telephone and fax numbers; seat number; counties in their districts; the number of terms they have served in the legislature; links to legislators' social media accounts; and their educational and occupational backgrounds. It also includes highlights and trends for legislators' demographics and occupations, past effectiveness rankings, and more. The *Citizen's Guide* app is available for IOS and Android devices, thanks to a sponsorship by EMC².

For more information, call Nancy Richmond Rose, Executive Director at the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research, at (919) 832-2839; rosebud@nccppr.org.

LEGISLATORS NOT RETURNING IN 2017

		2016 Effectiveness Ranking	
Legislator	Party/County		
Not Running for Re-election to the N.C. General Assembly			
<u>Senate</u>			
1. Sen. Thomas (Tom) M. Apodaca	(R-Henderson)	2	■
2. Sen. Robert (Bob) Rucho	(R-Mecklenburg)	5	■
3. Sen. E. S. (Buck) Newton	(R-Wilson)	12	■
4. Sen. Fletcher L. Hartsell, Jr.	(R-Cabarrus)	15	■
5. Sen. Stan Bingham	(R-Davidson)	23	■
<u>House</u>			
6. Rep. Paul (Skip) Stam	(R-Wake)	4	■
7. Rep. N. Leo Daughtry	(R-Johnston)	6	■
8. Rep. T. Roger West	(R-Cherokee)	18	■
9. Rep. James H. Langdon, Jr.	(R-Johnston)	41	■
10. Rep. Paul N. Tine	(U-Dare)	44	■
11. Rep. Richard (Rick) Catlin	(R-New Hanover)	47	■
12. Rep. James C. (Chris) Whitmire	(R-Transylvania)	52	■
13. Rep. Jacqueline Michelle Schaffer	(R-Mecklenburg)	61	■
14. Rep. Rayne Brown	(R-Davidson)	63	■
15. Rep. Tricia Ann Cotham	(D-Mecklenburg)	74	■
16. Rep. Kenneth (Ken) N. Waddell	(D-Columbus)	83	■
17. Rep. Nathan Angus Baskerville	(D-Vance)	114	■
Resigned Since Beginning of 2015-2016 Session and Not Running for Re-Election			
<u>Senate</u>			
18. Sen. Daniel (Dan) F. Soucek	(R-Watauga)	24	■
19. Sen. Joshua (Josh) H. Stein	(D-Wake)	30	■
<u>House</u>			
20. Rep. Rick Glazier	(D-Cumberland)	13	■
21. Rep. Bryan R. Holloway	(R-Stokes)	48	■
22. Rep. Brian M. Brown	(R-Pitt)	64	■
Lost in May 2016 Primary Election			
23. Rep. George S. Robinson	(R-Caldwell)	81	■
24. Rep. Ralph Johnson*	(D-Guilford)	118	■
House Member Running for State Senate			
25. Rep. J. Daniel (Dan) Bishop	(R-Mecklenburg)	55	■
Running for Congress and <u>May</u> Not Be Back			
<u>Senate</u>			
Sen. Andrew C. Brock	(R-Davie)	16	■
<u>House</u>			
Rep. Julia Craven Howard	(R-Davie)	31	■
Rep. Harry J. Warren	(R-Rowan)	37	■
Rep. John Marshall Blust	(R-Guilford)	40	■
Rep. Rodney W. Moore	(D-Mecklenburg)	85	■
Rep. Carla D. Cunningham	(D-Mecklenburg)	113	■

*Deceased

■ Democrat
■ Republican
■ Unaffiliated

