



# Center for **Effective Lawmaking**

Michigan State University LLP— December 9, 2024  
Prof. Alan Wiseman, Vanderbilt University

# The Center for Effective Lawmaking

- Partnership between University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University
- Mission

We advance the generation, communication, and use of new knowledge about the effectiveness of individual lawmakers and U.S. legislative institutions.



# What do these people have in common?



# They were all highly effective lawmakers in their freshman terms as state legislators



Allison Russo



Laurie Davis



Paul Tucker



Melissa Miller



Fred Durhall III



Chris Ward



Tim Whelan



Monica Wallace



Kenneth Kurtz



Cindy Abrams



# Effective Lawmakers Because in Majority?



Allison Russo



Laurie Davis



Paul Tucker



Melissa Miller



Fred Durhall III



Chris Ward



Tim Whelan



Monica Wallace



Kenneth Kurtz



Cindy Abrams

# Effective Lawmakers Because in Majority?



Allison Russo (D)



Laurie Davis (R)



Paul Tucker (D)



Melissa Miller (R)



Fred Durhall III (D)



Chris Ward (D)



Tim Whelan (R)



Monica Wallace (D)



Kenneth Kurtz (R)



Cindy Abrams (R)



# Effective Lawmakers Because in Majority?



Allison Russo (D): OH



Laurie Davis (R): CA



Paul Tucker (D): MA



Melissa Miller (R): NY



Fred Durhall III (D): MI



Chris Ward (D): CA



Tim Whelan (R): MA



Monica Wallace (D): NY



Kenneth Kurtz (R): MI



Cindy Abrams (R): OH

# Effective Lawmakers Because in Majority?



Allison Russo (D)

OH House  
2019-2020  
9 bills, 1 law



Laurie Davis (R)

CA State Assembly  
2021-2022  
29 bills, 13 laws



Melissa Miller (R)

NY State Assembly  
2017-2018  
19 bills, 3 laws



Tim Whelan (R)

MA House  
2015-2016  
38 bills, 3 laws



Kenneth Kurtz (R)

MI House  
2009-2010  
9 bills, 4 laws



# How to be an effective lawmaker from Day 1?



Allison Russo (D): OH



Laurie Davis (R): CA



Paul Tucker (D): MA



Melissa Miller (R): NY



Fred Durhall III (D): MI



Chris Ward (D): CA



Tim Whelan (R): MA



Monica Wallace (D): NY



Kenneth Kurtz (R): MI



Cindy Abrams (R): OH

# Measuring Effectiveness

***SUBSTANTIVE AND SIGNIFICANT***

BILLS

AIC

ABC

PASS

LAW

commemoratives



CONGRESS

117th Congress ▾

CHAMBER

Senate

House

SORT

Party Rank ▾

ISSUE

All ▾

Filter by state

Search by name or zip

VA ▾

AK

ME

WI

VT

NH

WA

ID

MT

ND

MN

IL

MI

NY

MA

RI

OR

NV

WY

SD

IA

IN

OH

PA

NJ

CT

CA

UT

CO

NE

MO

KY

WV

VA

MD

DE

## Scores for VA Members of the 117th House

**Connolly, Gerald**

D, VA-11

1.472

1/232



7.142 >

**Spanberger, Abigail**

D, VA-7

1.438

19/232



2.826 >

**Scott, Bobby**

D, VA-3

2.500

22/232



2.790 >

**Beyer, Don**

D, VA-8

1.452

23/232



2.758 >

**Luria, Elaine**

D, VA-2

1.438

36/232



2.197 >

**Wittman, Robert**

R, VA-1

0.606

43/222



0.933 >

**Griffith, H. Morgan**

R, VA-9

0.592

46/222



0.889 >

Now scoring *state legislators* as well,  
many future insights and opportunities

## Legislative Effectiveness in the American States

Published online by Cambridge University Press: **15 February 2024**

PETER BUCCHIANERI , CRAIG VOLDEN  and ALAN E. WISEMAN 

[Show author details](#) ▼

American Political Science Review

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Effective Lawmaking



# Define your lawmaking agenda

- Commit to being a lawmaker
- Develop an agenda that draws from personal experiences and/or district needs
- Integrate committee assignments with agenda
- Focus agenda on top priorities



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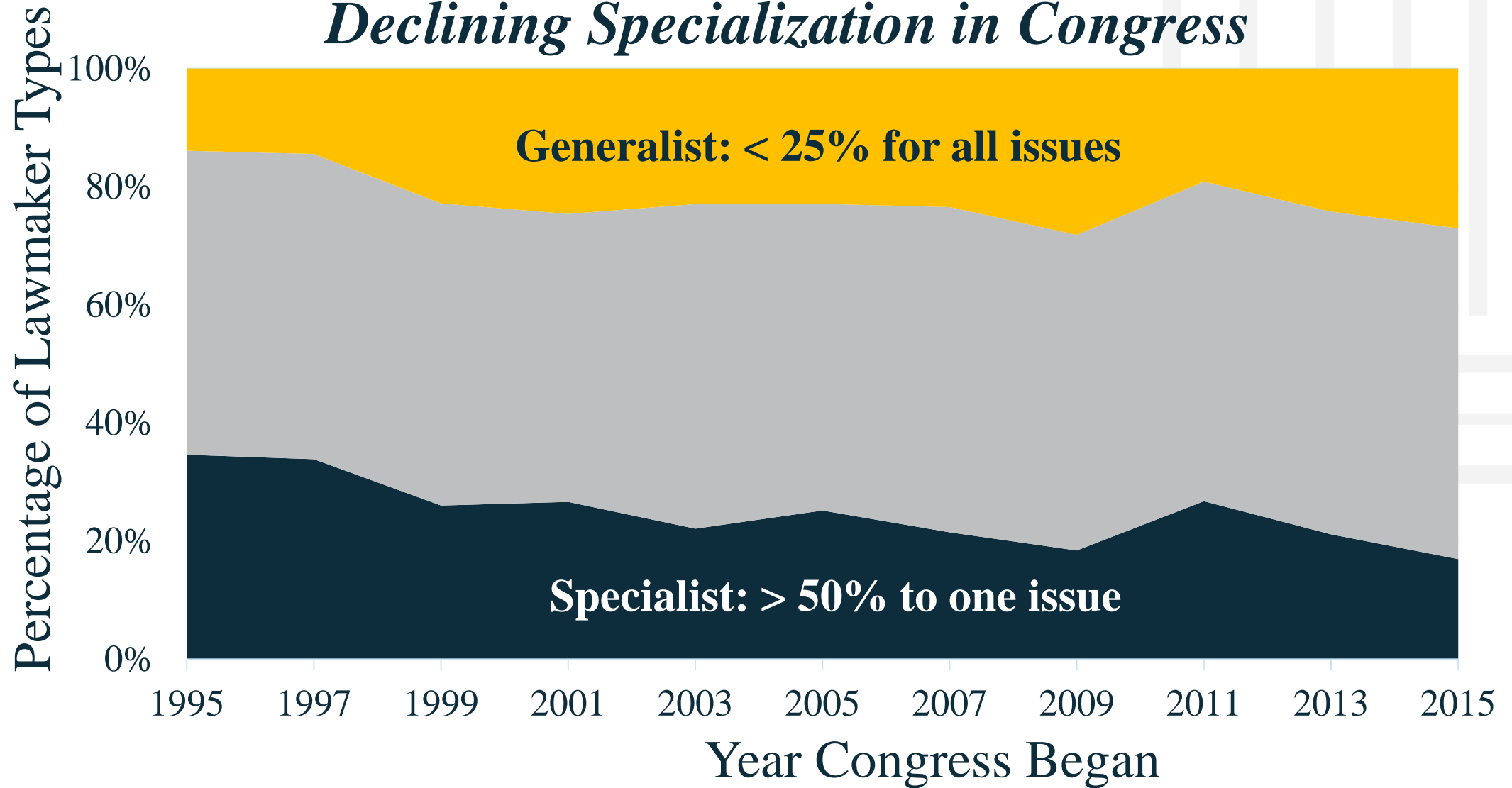
## Cultivating Agenda around District Interests



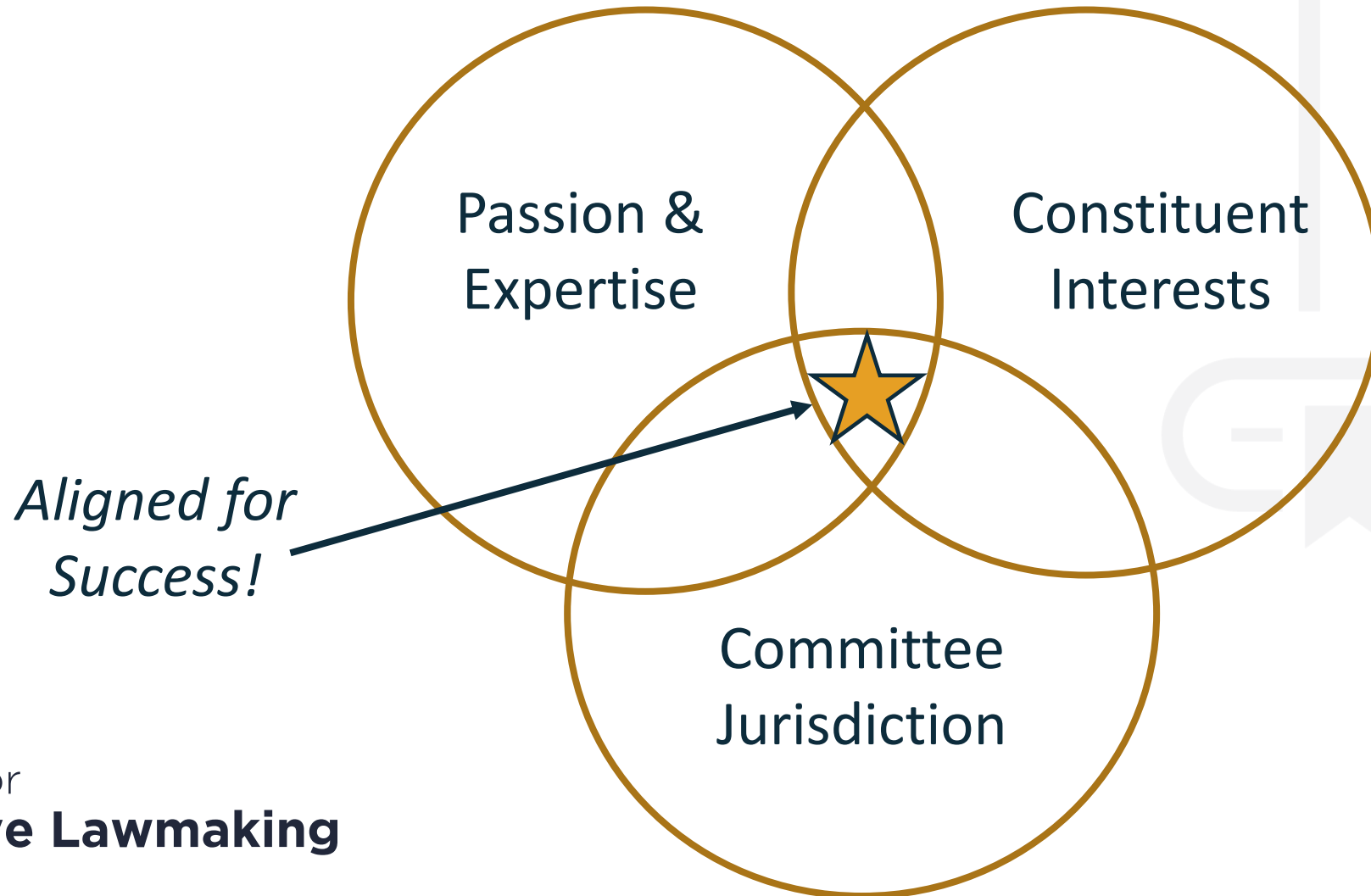


# Focus agenda on top priorities

## *Declining Specialization in Congress*



# How to Define Your Lawmaking Agenda





# Engage with Lawmaking Partners

- Negotiate with committee and floor leaders
- Grow bipartisan cosponsorships & articulate shared goals
- Expand coalition beyond your own chamber

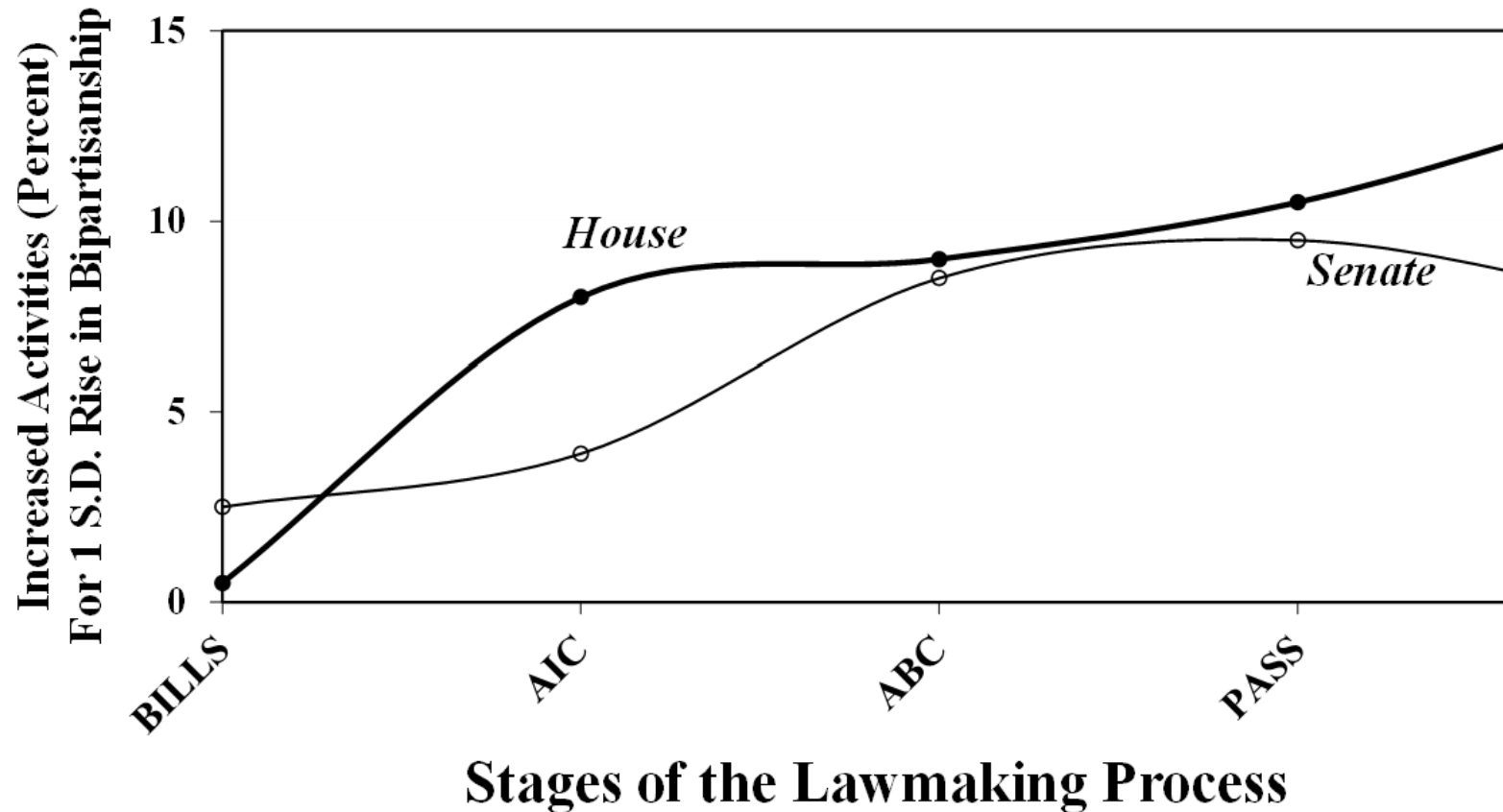


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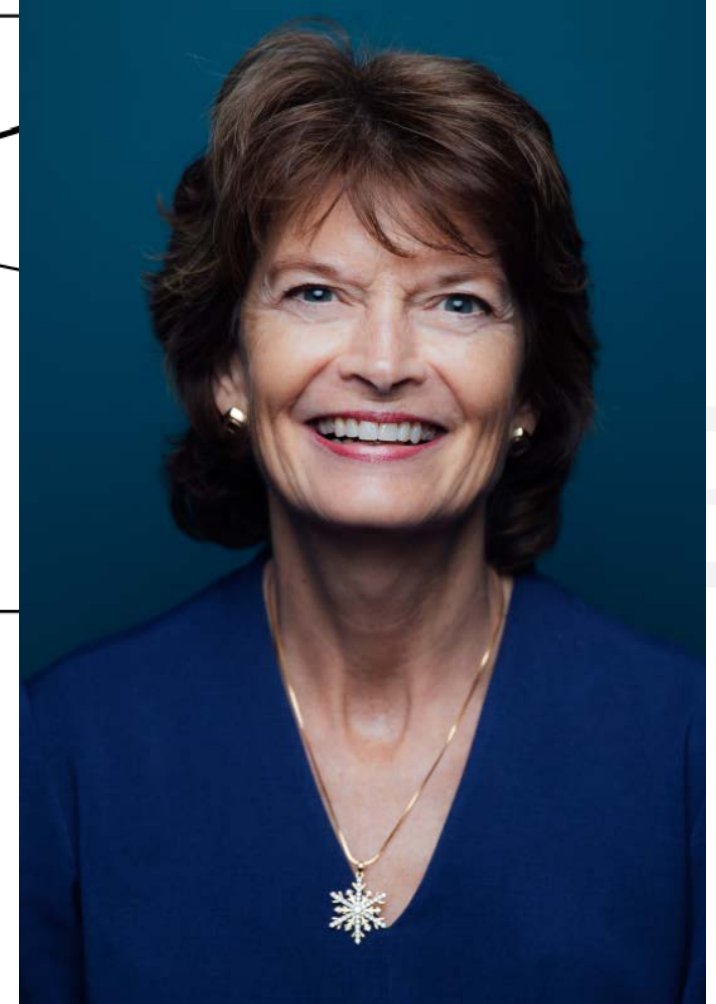
Negotiate with  
committee and  
floor leaders



# Grow bipartisan cosponsorships



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Expand your  
coalition beyond  
your own  
chamber

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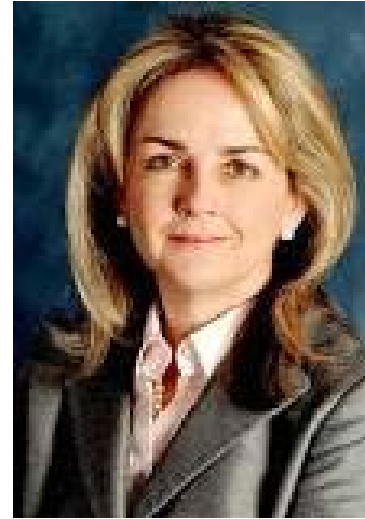
# Effective Lawmaking in State Legislatures & Congress



Rep. Jay Obernolte  
(R-CA)



Rep. Mike Thompson  
(D-CA)



Rep. Madeleine Dean  
(D-PA)



Rep. Dwight Evans  
(D-PA)



Rep. Hakeem Jeffries  
(D-NY)



Rep. Bill Huizenga  
(R-MI)

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# Best Practices in Effective Lawmaking

- Define your lawmaking agenda
- Pro-actively engage with lawmaking partners
- Congratulations!

# Questions?

