

# MICHIGAN ELECTORATE

## Michigan's 102<sup>nd</sup> Legislature

January 2025

### Summary

This paper reviews select legislation, summarizes the legislature as a whole, and scores select legislators themselves for Michigan's 102<sup>nd</sup> Legislature.<sup>1</sup>

This legislative session represents the first time in thirty years that the Democratic Party controlled both legislative chambers and the Governor's office. In the November 2024 election, Republicans regained control of the state House, and Lansing changed to a divided government.

### Legislative Reviews

We examined a small number of bills (and packages of bills), selected based on bill popularity and controversy. "Popularity" is indicated by super majority, bipartisan support, a minimal number of recorded votes with no recorded objections. "Controversial bills" are those with which:

- passed on strict party lines
- barely passed, or barely failed
- had majority support, but not leadership support
- required multiple "round trips" between chambers

In 2023, Michigan passed [321 public acts](#). In 2024, Michigan passed [185 public acts](#). At the time of this writing, bills are still waiting to be transferred to the Governor.

At this time, statistics drawn from [LegiScan](#) show:

- more than 4000 legislative actions
- 487 bills passed into law, including 339 new acts
- 213 bills originating in the Senate passed, 274 in the House
- no legislation vetoed by the Governor

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<sup>1</sup>Our 2023 interim study is available [here](#).

## **Rural Hospital Funding**

[Senate bill 701](#) increased funding for rural hospitals roughly 6% and removed priority spending to Michigan's Critical Access Hospitals (all thirty-five of which are part of the MICAH system).

The Senate discharged the bill from committee directly to the floor, where it passed a bipartisan vote 36-0 on the same day. Seven days later the House also discharged the bill to the floor, where it passed with a bipartisan 104-5 vote. We note the legislative procedure requires a five day layover between chambers, and this bill's progress spanned a two day weekend - it passed as quickly as it could.

## **Early Presidential Primary**

[Senate bill 13](#) moved Michigan's presidential primary election to February 27<sup>th</sup>. The bill bypassed committee hearings to pass on strict party line votes in both chambers.

Republican Senators recorded several functional and philosophical objections, which, in hindsight, proved entirely irrelevant to the presidential election.

## Health Insurance Claims Transparency

[House Bill 4884](#) had majority bipartisan support, but did not move out of [committee](#). Had the bill become law, any person denied medical coverage could have demanded to know the reasoning for the denial:

*If a physician, hospital, clinic, or other person appeals the determination under this subsection, the insurer or the association created under section 3104 must provide the department and the physician, hospital, clinic, or other person the methodology used to determine the payment or reimbursement made by the insurer or association created under section 3104.*

The bill was introduced in mid-2023 by Rep. Julie Rogers (D-Kalamazoo), with support from forty-nine Democrats and seven Republicans. The sponsor list did not include either House Speaker Joe Tate or the committee Chair Brenda Carter.

We note some of Speaker Joe Tate's top donors included [UnitedHealth Group](#), [Blue Cross/Blue Shield](#), [Maxim HealthCare Group](#) and the [Henry Ford Health System](#).

## Anti-Discrimination

[Senate Bill 4](#) and its clone [House Bill 4003](#) added gender identity and sexual orientation to the list of classes legally protected against discrimination.

A dozen Republicans proposed more than [500 amendments](#), including:

- disallowing transgendered women in school sports
- disallowing sexual orientation as a protected class
- permitting gender discrimination for religious purposes
- adding COVID vaccination as a protected class
- adding religion as a protected class

All amendments were defeated by voice votes, and both bills passed with a strong bipartisan votes of 64-45. Several Representatives, in on-record protest, suggested the judiciary should decide the law:

*This bill will not stop the lawsuits that continue to go through our judicial system...*

*- Rep VanWoerkom (R - Norton Shores)*

*Courts have rendered that these expansions are already protected under the existing law.*

*- Rep Bollin (R - Brighton Twp)*

*There has been a court case that already identified sexual orientation and gender identity under the protected category of sex.*

*- Rep Lightner (R - Marshall)*

We note Reps Bollin and Lightner were both awarded for ‘Conservative Excellence’ by the American Conservative Union (ACU) - best known for running “CPAC,” the Conservative Political Action Committee.

## Conservators and Guardians

Legislators crafted dozens of bills to overhaul the state's currently ad-hoc system of court appointed guardians.

- guardian qualifications and disqualifications
- defined guardian duties, responsibilities, case load limits, reporting and schedules
- required accounting and inventory of the ward's estate
- established procedures by which a person is made a ward
- established licensing and suitability requirements
- created an Office of State Guardian Board

At the time of this writing, four bills had passed into law. More than half never had a hearing.

This area of law has a long, fraught history ripe with stories of fraud, abuse and neglect. Within the last few years, a Probate Judge with a twenty year [history of problems](#) was once again [reprimanded](#) by the Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice and her own Probate Court Chief Justice. She [retired](#) in late November of 2021 and the [guardianship company dissolved](#) with all agents disallowed from ever again serving as guardians in Michigan.

Washtenaw County's Probate Courts has a unique history in this area, because a highly respected probate court clerk, [Brad Geller](#), drafted Michigan's 1988 "Guardianship Reform Act." Mr. Geller has been publicly critical of probate courts ever since. In 2004, Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Corrigan fired Mr. Geller.

In 2017 Mr. Geller filed [a federal lawsuit against Michigan](#) over the system of guardians and conservators.

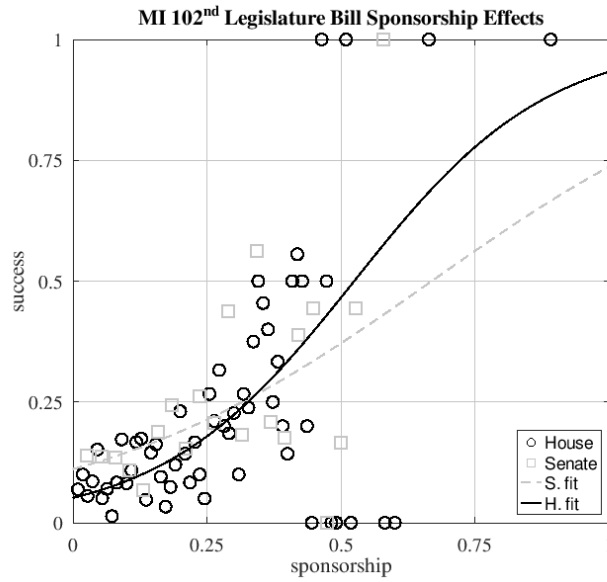
Michigan's new elected Attorney General Dana Nessel formed the Elder Abuse Task Force in 2019. A.G. Nessel [testified](#) in support of the bill package [HB4909](#), [HB4910](#), [HB4911](#) and [HB4912](#). Mr. Geller [testified against them](#). The bills have not passed.

# Legislature Assessment

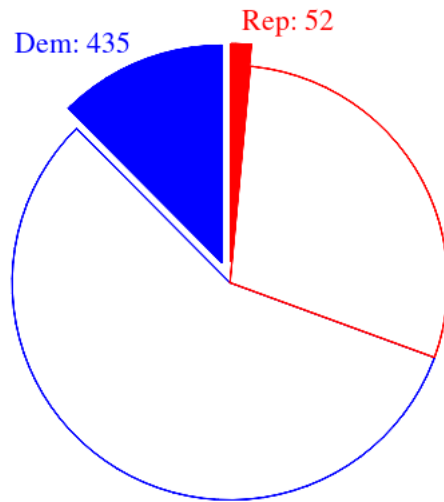
Our Legislature assessment includes these metrics:

- Quantity: the calendar legislative quantity
- Timing: the calendar of activity
- Topics: activity by Michigan Compiled Law chapter

The influence of bill sponsorship on bill success rate is shown below. This effect of co-sponsors was stronger in the House than the Senate.



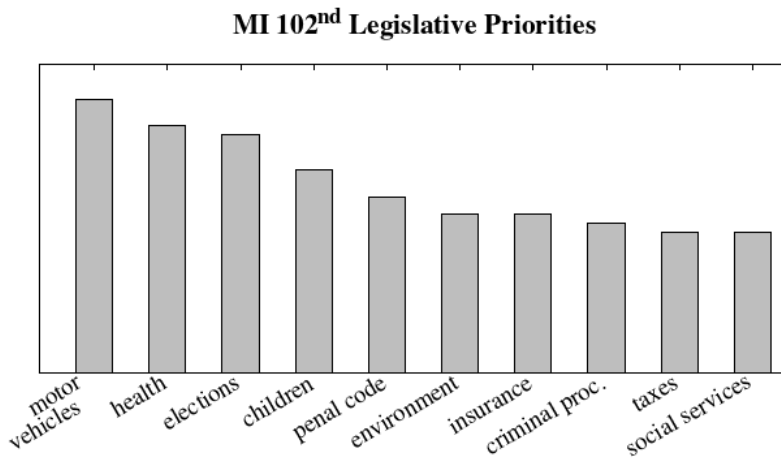
The chart below compares legislation passed to the total amount introduced, by party.



In the majority party, four Representatives and one Senator passed no legislation. In the minority party, thirty-six Representatives and two Senators passed no legislation.

### Most Active Areas of Law

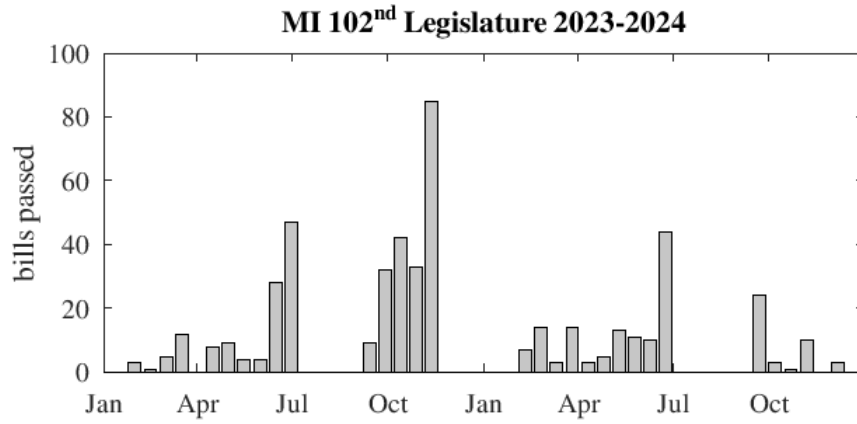
The ten most active chapters of Michigan law are show in the histogram below:



1. roughly one third of the motor vehicle bills related to license plates

- 2. half of the health bills related to licensure and fees
- 3. roughly one third of the new election laws regulated use of artificial intelligence in political ads

The timing of final votes on passed bills is shown below:



# Legislator Scoring

Our legislator scoring includes these metrics:

- “Activity ( $B$ ):” quantity of legislation initiated
- “Effectiveness ( $L$ ):” quantity of legislation passed
- “Efficiency ( $\eta$ ):” the ratio of effectiveness to activity, e.g.

$$\eta = \frac{L}{B}$$

The graphic below indicates top performing legislators, based on their individual sponsorship or co-sponsorship of successful bills. We are happy to note that half of the Washtenaw County delegation were top legislators.



Under our scoring, the best performer was Senator Anthony (D - Oxford), and the worst was Representative Schriver (R - Oxford):

- submitted thirty-four bills, none of which received a committee hearing
- [lost committee assignments and staff for promoting racist conspiracy theories](#)

For the analyses on the following pages, our “efficiency” score is defined as:

## Majority Party Scoring

<b>criteria</b>	<b>Representatives</b>	<b>comments</b>
	Tsernoglou (East Lansing)	
most effective	Brabec (Saline) Breen (Novi)	ten bills passed (each)
most efficient	Liberati (Allen Park)	58% success rate
most active	Skaggs (East Grand Rapids)	sixty-six bills submitted
least active	Byrnes (Dearborn)	nine bills submitted
	Paiz (Harper Woods)	
least effective	Wegela (Garden City) Xiong (Warren)	zero bills passed
<b>criteria</b>	<b>Senators</b>	<b>comments</b>
most effective	Anthony (Lansing)	eighteen bills passed
most efficient	Klinefelt (Eastpointe)	38% success rate
most active	Singh (Lansing)	seventy bills submitted
least effective	Wojno (Center Line)	three bills passed
least active	McDonald-Rivet (Saginaw)	twenty-six bills submitted

Notes:

- We do not score the Speaker of the House or Senate majority leader
- Senator McDonald-Rivet was elected Michigan's 8<sup>th</sup> congressional district

## Minority Party Scoring

For the minority party we comment on neither minimum effectiveness nor efficiency, with one exception: Rep. Friske (R- Charlevoix).

Like many of his colleagues, Rep. Friske passed no legislation in this session. Within that group, just under one third faced a primary challenger during their re-election bid. Former Rep. Friske appears to be the only one of this group to lose in the 2024 primary, after he was arrested and jailed for [sexual assault with shots fired](#).<sup>2</sup>

<b>criteria</b>	<b>Representatives</b>	<b>comments</b>
most effective	Filler (Saginaw Twp)	six bills passed
most efficient	Mueller (Fenton)	38% success rate
least active	Posthumus (Kent Cnty.) Beson (Bay City)	four bills submitted (each)
most active	Schrivier (Oxford)	thirty-four bills submitted
<b>criteria</b>	<b>Senators</b>	<b>comments</b>
most effective	Damoose (Cheboygan)	five bills passed
most efficient	Damoose (Cheboygan)	23% success rate
most active	Albert (Battle Creek)	thirty bills submitted
least active	Nesbitt (Benton Harbor)	one bill submitted

Notes:

- the most effective minority party member passed most of his bills with co-sponsorship from the most effective majority party member
- minority party member Senator Damoose passed a bill with no cosponsors

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<sup>2</sup>[upnorthlive.com/news/local/rep-friske-defeated-in-gop-primary-after-his-arrest-in-lansing-neil-friske-republican-election-democrat-police-firearm-gun](https://www.upnorthlive.com/news/local/rep-friske-defeated-in-gop-primary-after-his-arrest-in-lansing-neil-friske-republican-election-democrat-police-firearm-gun)