

MICHIGAN ELECTORATE

Michigan's 103rd Legislature

January 2026

Summary

This paper reviews the first year of Michigan's 103rd state legislature. We examine legislation, measure the legislature's output and identify the best and worst performing individual legislators. This legislature appears to be on track as the least productive of any to ever hold session.¹

Over the last three sessions, control of the state House and Senate has flipped from unified under Republicans, to unified under Democrats, to divided government with Republicans in a House majority and Democrats in a Senate majority. We therefore also compare the last three legislative sessions, and compare today's politically divided chambers to a similar situation in 2009. We conclude the poor performance in 2025 is likely due to a long-term trend among Republicans.

Select Legislation

We select a number of bills (and bill packages) based on observed support and opposition. "Support" is indicated by a super majority vote, large bipartisan support and exactly four recorded votes. "Opposition" to bills is indicated by narrow voting margins, strict party line votes and legislation that stalled with majority support. We give particular attention to interesting new acts, and we de-prioritize public acts such as road names or calendar days.

A searchable database of all legislation in calendar year 2025 is available at [our website](#)².

¹1940's legislature did not hold any sessions at all

²mi-electorate.org/CY2026/MI103rdLeg/MILeg103rdActions.html

The Budget

The legislature opened January 8th, and took nine months of its first year to agree to a 2025-2026 state budget. The full budget was four months late to the state’s legal deadline, and a week after the end of the fiscal year. The legislature delivered the budget in two steps.

First, the legislature passed a week long stop-gap bill. The bill cleared both legislative chambers in four minutes of discussion at 2am, October 1st. That dramatic difference in legislative vigor, between the months of inaction followed by a flurry of activity warranted a video clip of the stop gap bill’s passage, viewable at [our website](#).³

At the end of that week, they delivered a complete budget. The bill passed October 3rd and the Governor signed it into law October 7th.

The One Week Budget

March 6th, the Michigan House of Representatives passed [bill HB4161](#)⁴ to fund police, courts and prisons but without funding, for example, for Michigan’s House of Representatives. The bill passed along a nearly party line vote. One minority party member, [Rep. Karen Whitsett](#) (D - Detroit), voted with the majority. Rep. Whitsett is best known for ending the 102nd legislature early by [joining a Republican walkout](#) during lame duck session.

In that proceeding, [Rep. Veronica Paiz](#) (D - Harper Woods) [raised concerns](#) about the bill’s timing and content (or lack thereof):

Rep. Paiz, having reserved the right to explain her protest against the passage of the bill, made the following statement:

“Mr. Speaker and members of the House:

1. The Majority Party provided us with the budget/bill about 20 minutes before the vote. 2. As such, I’m unsure if everything that is constitutionally required to be in this budget bill 3. It appears that this bill is setting up a state government shutdown.”

Seven months later, on October 1st, the Senate amended HB4161 into a bill covering the first week of October, The amendment included funding for the House of Representatives (among other things). The amended bill passed the Senate at 1:35AM in a 31 to 2 vote. Fifteen minutes later, the bill passed the House, 103 to 4. Governor Whitmer signed the bill [into law](#) at 3:30 in the morning.

10/01/2025	HJ 91 Pg. 1075	presented to the Governor 10/01/2025 03:26 AM
10/01/2025	HJ 91 Pg. 1076	approved by the Governor 10/01/2025 03:50 AM

³www.mi-electorate.org/CY2026/MI103rdLeg/MIleg103StopGapBudget.mp4

⁴legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-4161

The Actual Budget

At 10am on October 1st, the Senate re-convened and took up a second [budget bill](#) from July 1st, HB4706.⁵ This bill had passed the House on August 26th along a nearly party line vote, 59 to 45, with Rep. Whitsett again joining the majority.

During that proceeding, Minority Floor Lead [Fitzgerald](#) (D - Wyoming) [asked an indirect question](#) about private interests receiving public funding.⁶

Point of Order

Rep. Fitzgerald requested a ruling of the Chair on if the vote threshold by which House Bill No. 4706 could be announced for the benefit of the members.

The Chair ruled a majority of members elected and serving is needed.

Point of Order

Rep. Fitzgerald requested a ruling of the Chair on pursuant to the Michigan Constitution, Article IV, Section 30 a 2/3 vote threshold is desired.

The Chair ruled I answered your question previously.

[Article IV, section 30](#) of Michigan's constitution requires a higher vote threshold to move public money into private hands.

The Senate amended the bill and passed the result, 21 to 10 on October 1st, with six Senators not voting and two members of the minority party voted with the majority: [Sen. McBroom](#) (R - Vulcan) and [Sen. Lindsay](#) (R - Coldwater). Later that same day, the amended bill failed a vote in the House, 107 against to 2 in favor.

Each chamber then named three of their members to a conference committee. October 2nd the conference committee returned [their version](#) of the bill.⁷ It passed the House 101 to 8 on October 2nd and 31 to 5 in the Senate on October 3rd. Governor Whitmer signed it into [law](#) on October 7th.

When all was said and done, Michigan's budget was a week late against the [statutory September 30th fiscal year](#)⁸ and nearly 100 days late against the [statutory July 1st budget deadline](#).⁹ All told, the legislature had taken 273 days to pass the budget. We note the previous legislature passed their budget in March.

⁵legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-4706

⁶legislature.mi.gov/documents/2025-2026/journal/House/pdf/2025-HJ-08-26-075.pdf

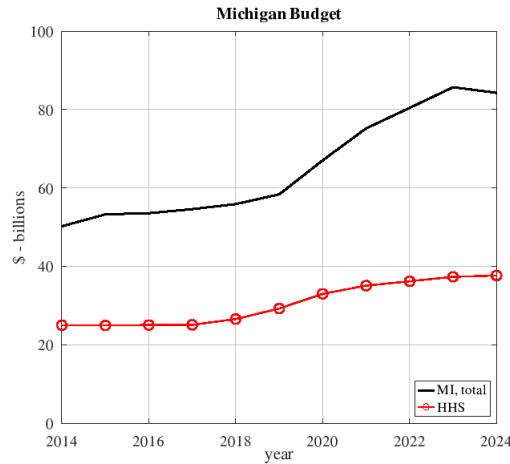
⁷legislature.mi.gov/documents/2025-2026/billconferencereport/House/pdf/2025-HB-4706-CR-1.pdf

⁸www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-18-1491

⁹www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=MCL-18-1365

Budget Impact

We examined the [line item budget](#).¹⁰ Compared to the [previous budget](#)¹¹, we note what appears to be a \$7.6 billion cut to Health Services within the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS). As shown below, HHS consumes nearly half of Michigan’s annual state budget.^{12 , 13}



Health Services’ appropriation in fiscal year 2025:

Sec. 101. There is appropriated for the department of health and human services for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, from the following funds:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
GROSS APPROPRIATION	\$ 37,646,231,100

Health Services’ appropriation in fiscal year 2026:

Sec. 101. There is appropriated for the department of health and human services for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, from the following funds:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
GROSS APPROPRIATION	\$ 30,025,568,200

The reduction was achieved by cutting Health plan services and Michigan’s Medicaid expansion, called “Healthy Michigan.”

¹⁰www.michigan.gov/budget/-/media/Project/Websites/budget/Fiscal/Final-Signed-Budget-Bills/FY26-General-Omnibus-HB-4706-PA-22-of-2025-Includes-2025-Supplemental-Funding.pdf

¹¹www.michigan.gov/budget/-/media/Project/Websites/budget/Fiscal/Final-Signed-Budget-Bills/FY25-General-Omnibus-SB-747-PA-121-of-2024-Includes-2024-Supplemental-Funding.pdf

¹²sfa.senate.michigan.gov/StateBudget/AdjustedGross_AppropriationHistory.pdf

¹³sfa.senate.michigan.gov/Departments/DPHhs_web.html

Appropriations for Michigan’s Health plan and Medicaid expansion appear to have been cut by **eight billion dollars**. Appropriations for fiscal year 2025 were:¹⁴

Health plan services	\$ 7,762,291,300
Healthy Michigan plan	\$ 6,120,410,300

Appropriations for fiscal year 2026 are:¹⁵

Health plan services	\$ 3,509,255,900
Healthy Michigan plan	\$ 2,362,533,800

The total reductions for these two line items add up to more than the gross appropriation reduction for the department, because reductions in these two areas are offset by increases in other areas. For example, recuperative care received an additional \$250 million, \$199 million was added to long-term care services and smaller amounts in more than a dozen other areas. The [Michigan Senate Fiscal Agency](#).¹⁶ has not published its budget analysis yet. This is almost certainly due to the budget decision arriving very late, as detailed above. When their analysis arrives, we will compare to our own.

There is significant interaction between Michigan’s health care and the federal plans. It is currently unclear what funding will appear from the federal government.

¹⁴www.michigan.gov/budget/-/media/Project/Websites/budget/Fiscal/Final-Signed-Budget-Bills/FY25-General-Omnibus-SB-747-PA-121-of-2024-Includes-2024-Supplemental-Funding.pdf

¹⁵www.michigan.gov/budget/-/media/Project/Websites/budget/Fiscal/Final-Signed-Budget-Bills/FY26-General-Omnibus-HB-4706-PA-22-of-2025-Includes-2025-Supplemental-Funding.pdf

¹⁶sfa.senate.michigan.gov/Departments/DPcrs_web.html

Popular Legislation

This legislative session demonstrated historically low productivity, but passed several new acts. We take the popularity of these new acts as proof the legislature is aware of the existence of new, pressing regulatory needs.

Anti-SLAPP

[House bill 4045¹⁷](#), a new act, passed the House unanimously when introduced, and after amendments passed the Senate unanimously. The bill discourages strategic lawsuits against public participation, called “SLAPP” suits. SLAPP suits are often initiated by well-funded entities against political opponents, as famously described in the court case *Gordon v. Marrone*, 590 N.Y.S.2d 649 (1992):

SLAPP suits function by forcing the target into the judicial arena where the SLAPP filer foists upon the target the expenses of a defense. The longer the litigation can be stretched out, the more litigation that can be churned, the greater the expense that is inflicted and the closer the SLAPP filer moves to success. . . . The ripple effect of such suits in our society is enormous. Persons who have been outspoken on issues of public importance targeted in such suits or who have witnessed such suits will often choose in the future to stay silent. Short of a gun to the head, a greater threat to First Amendment expression can scarcely be imagined.

– Justice J. Nicholas Colabella

Michigan’s new law was modeled heavily on the “[Uniform Public Expression Protection Act](#)” (UPEPA) created by the Uniform Law Commission. Since 2020, a dozen states have adopted their versions of the UPEPA. Because wealthy plaintiffs can sue anywhere, consistent state laws nationwide are the key to protecting the public.

Michigan’s new law allows a defendant to move for reasonable restrictions on demands for discovery, delaying motions and proceedings, and to disassociate from “shotgun” lawsuits. The law is written with a clear intent:

Sec. 11. This act must be broadly construed and applied to protect the exercise of the right of freedom of speech and of the press, the right to assemble and petition the government for a redress of grievances, and the right of association, guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the state constitution of 1963.

[Representative Kara Hope](#) introduced the legislation. Governor Whitmer signed the bill into law December 31st.

¹⁷legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-4045

Anti-Deepfake Pornography

Two bills, [HB4047](#)¹⁸ and [HB4048](#),¹⁹ give legal protection to victims of computer generated pornography using their likeness. These bills are part of a [national trend](#) among states and [federal](#) lawmaking efforts.

In their first House vote, both bills passed with a single nay vote, cast by the Republican's least effective Representative (see our discussion of legislators, below). The bills were watered down in the Senate by adding an exemption for software companies, removing the hefty \$100,000 fine and replacing criminal with civil justice. On its return trip, the amended bill passed the house 97 to 5.

Controversial Legislation

Given the historically low legislative productivity, we delay our full analysis of controversy until the end of the session. We note however in the Senate that six bills passed by a one vote margin, and that one Senate seat remained vacant all year (district 35 in Saginaw). For now, we examine a bill package from the House which had majority support, yet did not move out of committee.

Xylazine Regulation

[Rep. Kelly Breen](#) brought back regulatory proposals for the dangerous animal tranquilizer Xylazine, known by its street name "tranq." This session, Rep. Breen gained an ally from across the aisle in [Rep. Mike Mueller](#).

Rep. Breen gathered 56 sponsors - a voting majority - for her bill, [HB4166](#)²⁰. Rep. Mueller gained 55 for his. [HB4167](#)²¹ Speaker Matt Hall was not a co-sponsor; he sent the bills to the Judiciary Committee in March and they have not moved.

The drug company Bayer AG invented Xylazine. Bayer was ranked [#50](#) of the top 1000 political lobbyists in 2024.

¹⁸legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-4047

¹⁹legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-4048

²⁰legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-4166

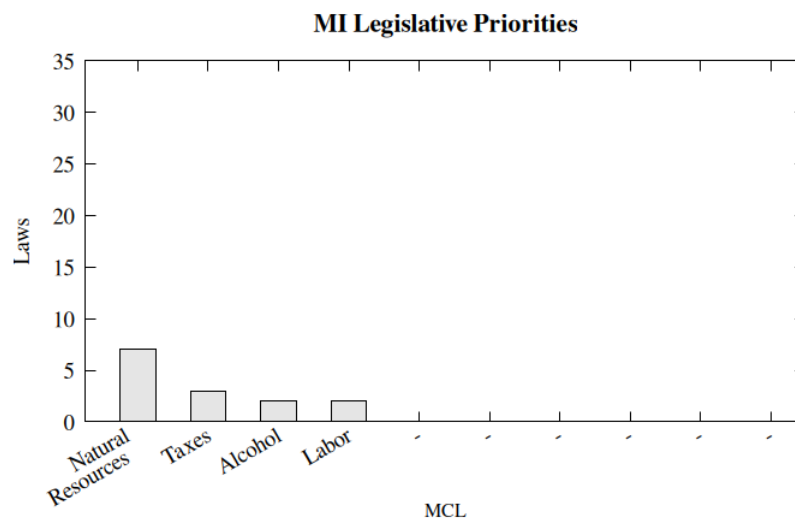
²¹legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-4167

The Legislature

Our metrics include legislative priorities, activity and timing.

Priorities

We identify legislative “priorities” by multiple legislative bills passed within a single chapter of the hundreds in Michigan law. This legislature passed very few bills (see discussion below), and as a result only three chapters in Michigan law received more than one modification.



Activity

Our summary of the legislature’s activities is shown in the table below. As mentioned, Michigan’s 103rd is on track to be the least productive to ever hold session. In the following analyses we conclude this is mostly due to a long-term trend attributable to the Republican party.

In the table below, we compare performance in 2025, the first year of Michigan’s 103rd legislature, against first year performance of the previous two, because the three most recent sessions share some elected officials in common. We also compare to performance of Michigan’s 95th legislature in its first year, because, like today, the 95th legislature had split partisan control of the two chambers, li

bills	95th	101st	102nd	103rd
total	2788	2456	2044	2210
passed	435	346	485	74
new acts	19	11	25	8
signed	242	168	321	38

The data above shows the current Michigan legislature submitted legislation and created new acts in roughly the same amount as the three reference legislatures, but has an order of magnitude less output into law, overall - despite considerable membership carryover.

Our default data source for bills is [LegiScan](#).²² Our Public Acts and veto source is the [legislature’s own records](#).²³ Note there is a procedural time delay between passing a bill out of the legislature and the Governor’s signature or veto.

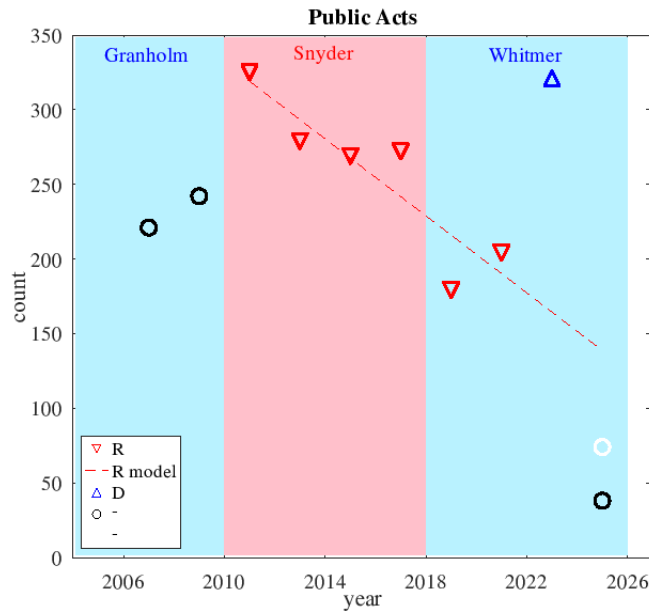
²²legiscan.com/

²³www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/PublicActs

Next we attempt to put the historically low legislative productivity in perspective. The table below shows a history of political party control of Michigan’s legislature and governor’s office.

Year	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Governor	D	D	D	D	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
Legislature	94 th		95 th		96 th		97 th		98 th		99 th		100 th		101 st		10 nd		103 rd	
Senate	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	D	D	D
House	D	D	D	D	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	D	R	R

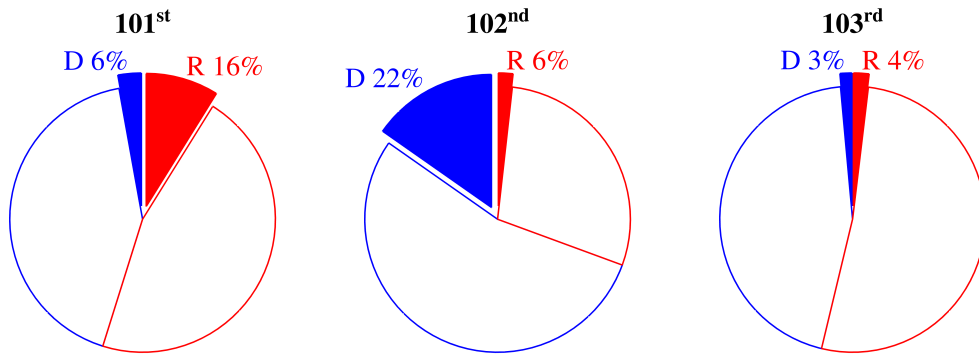
The graph below shows Public Acts passed in the first year of a legislative session. Red downwards triangles indicate Republican control of the legislature, black circles indicate split control, and the blue upwards triangle indicates Democratic control.



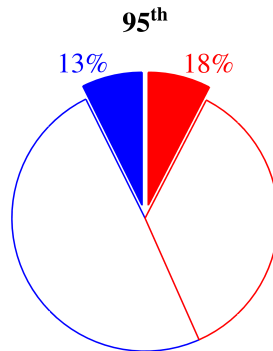
On average, legislatures pass roughly 260 Public Acts in their first year. Since 2011, however, productivity declined under Republican-controlled legislatures. The dashed line models this trend; 78% of the variation in the Republican-controlled legislative data shown is explained by the model. The model predicts a twenty-year low total of 139 Public Acts, had the legislature been unified under the Republicans. We attribute the difference between the prediction actual performance, which is worse, to timing delays (e.g. 74 bills passed to the Governor, but only 38 were signed by the end of the year) and the split partisan control rather than unified Republican control.

Bill Partisan Splits

The last three Michigan legislatures featured Republican control, Democratic control and a split legislature. The pie charts below show performance of the three side by side. Republican sponsored bills are on the the right; Democratic bills on the left. The bills that were voted out to the Governor's desk are labeled as a percentage of the total. The balance of the pie chart shows initiated legislation that did not pass out of the legislature.



Divided power is reflected in the roughly equal productivity and low efficiency for the two parties. This was the case in the 95th legislature as well:



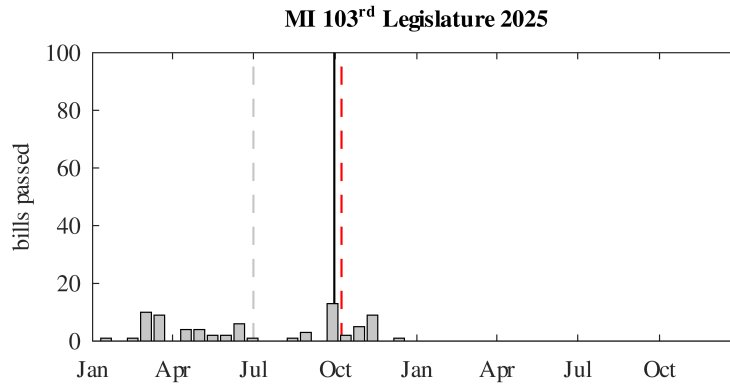
Some legislators worked more collaboratively than others. Our interactive collegiality models for the [House](#)²⁴ and [Senate](#)²⁵ show these effects.

²⁴www.mi-electorate.org/CY2026/MI103rdLegReviewPart1/MI103rdHouseConnectivity.html

²⁵www.mi-electorate.org/CY2026/MI103rdLegReviewPart1/MI103rdSenateConnectivity.html

Timing

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



The dashed gray line shows the statutory budget deadline, the black line shows the end of the fiscal year, and the dashed red line shows when the legislature passed a complete budget. We note the previous session passed their budget in March.

Given the remarkably low amount of legislative activity, it seems likely the 2026 lame duck session will be busy.

House of Representatives

The 103rd legislature offers a deep bench of low performing Representatives:

- seventy-nine Representatives passed no bills in 2025 (D:46, R:33),
- seventeen passed neither a bill nor a resolution (D:10, R:7),
- five did not **cosponsor** any successful bills (D:3, R:2)

The table below summarizes our metrics for the house majority party.

criteria	Representatives	comments
most active	Jason Woolford (R - Howell)	37 bills & resolutions submitted
least active	David Martin (R - Davison)	7 bills & resolutions submitted
most effective	Matthew Bierlein (R - Vassar)	18 sponsored bills passed
least effective	Steve Carra (R - Three Rivers)	0 sponsored bills passed [‡]
most efficient	David Martin (R - Davison)	11 sponsored bills passed vs. 7 bills & resolutions submitted

[‡]Neither Reps. Carra nor Smit sponsored a passed bill, and so they were tied for least effective. Rep. Smit sponsored and passed a resolution, so we recognize Steve Carra as less effective.

The table below summarizes our metrics for the house minority party.

criteria	Representatives	comments
most active	Jason Morgan (D - Ann Arbor)	32 bills & resolutions submitted
least active	Karen Whitsett (D - Detroit)	1 bill submitted
most effective	Kelly Breen (D - Novi)	8 sponsored bills passed
least effective	Dylan Wegela (D - Garden City)	0 sponsored bills passed [‡]
most efficient	Peter Herzberg (D - Westland)	2 sponsored bills passed vs. 2 bills & resolutions submitted

[‡]Three Democrats tied for last place in effectiveness. Of them, we recognize Rep. Wegela, because in addition passing no legislation he also **removed** his sponsorship from [a bill that otherwise passed unanimously](#).

Senate

Twenty Senators passed no bills (R:11, D:8) and three passed neither a bill nor a resolution (R:2, D:1). The table below summarizes our metrics for the senate majority party.

criteria	Senators	comments
most active	Sam Singh (D - E. Lansing)	62 bills & resolutions submitted
least active	SD35 (vacant - Saginaw)	0 legislation
most effective	Sam Singh (D - E. Lansing)	16 sponsored bills passed
least effective	Jeff Irwin (D - Ann Arbor)	2 sponsored bills passed [†]
most efficient	Mallory McMorrow (D - Royal Oak)	8 sponsored bills passed vs. 13 bills & resolutions submitted

[†]Six senators passed only two bills and so were tied for least effective. Senator Irwin also sponsored no successful resolutions, so we rank him as least effective. We also note he was a top performer last year.²⁶

The table below summarizes our metrics for the senate minority party.

criteria	Senators	comments
most active	Thomas Albert (R - Lowell)	73 bills submitted
least active	SD35 (vacant - Saginaw)	0 legislation
most effective	Dan Lauwers (R - Brockway)	9 sponsored bills passed
least effective	Thomas Albert (R - Lowell)	0 sponsored bills passed
most efficient	Dan Lauwers (R - Brockway)	9 sponsored bills passed vs. 8 bills & resolutions submitted

We rank Thomas Albert as less effective than the vacant district 35 seat because while neither achieved anything in 2025, Senator Albert also consumed up to 75% of senate committee session resources by offering multiple lengthy amendments to be voted down and placing dozens of statements into the record.

Governor Whitmer called a special election in May of 2026 for Senate district 35. This seat was vacant for the entire first year of the 103rd session, since former Senator [Kristen McDonald-Rivet](#) was sworn in to United States House of Representatives five days before the Michigan legislature opened session.

²⁶pg 9, mi-electorate.org/CY2025/MI-Electorate-MI102LegReview-Jan2025.pdf