

Grade deflation: Group marginalizes lawmaker's worth

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The Legislature's been out of session since late May, but it's never too late to score a political point by ranking lawmakers, right? An activist group founded by trial lawyers ranked legislators this week on how "right" or "wrong" they were on a range of issues considered important to the group. In our view, the lower the ranking, the better the lawmaker is for business and the average citizen.

Legislative scorecards, rolled out annually by groups all along the political spectrum, are usually good for little more than a one-day splash in the media, no matter who produces them. Voters typically don't consider the scorecards when going to their polling places.

Only one legislator got a perfect score on ratings released by the [Oklahoma Foundation for Consumer & Patient Rights](#). None scored less than 50 percent. In general, Democrats scored better than Republicans.

[Rep. Kris Steele, R-Shawnee](#), was graded at just 66 percent despite being the co-author of at least two bills cherished by the foundation. Steele has done more than almost any lawmaker in recent years to advance the cause of health care for lower-income Oklahomans.

He's passionate about improving care and lowering the number of uninsured Oklahomans. Apparently, though, he voted the "wrong" way on too many bills to achieve even a "C" average on the scorecard. By "wrong," of course, we mean bills sought by trial lawyers for their own enrichment.

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