



Urban League
of Louisiana

2021 POLICY PRIORITIES

IN THIS AGENDA:

- *Voter Education & Engagement*
- *Criminal Justice Reform*
- *Education Equity*
- *Health Equity*
- *Workforce & Economic Development*
- *Other Issues*
- *Use Your Voice: How to Contact Your Legislators*

ABOUT

The Urban League of Louisiana is an affiliate of the National Urban League that works to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights for African Americans and others seeking equity across Louisiana. Its expansive policy platform aligns closely with the work of its three Centers of Excellence: The Center for Education and Youth Development, the Center of Workforce and Economic Development and the Center for Policy and Social Justice.

The Urban League of Louisiana developed its policy agenda for the 2021 Legislative Session by listening to residents across the state of Louisiana through statewide events including the 2019 Listen and Learn Tour, the 2019 Policy Work Groups, and the 2019 and 2021 Empowerment and Policy Conferences. The policy priorities are organized by the areas most frequently mentioned and prioritized by African Americans during these events and are also cornerstones to the Urban League's mission and work.

We are supporting bills that link to and support what people have said matters most.



VOTER EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

✓ ULLA SUPPORTS:

HB 285 (Rep. James): Increases the amount of time a voter may remain in the voting machine from no more than three minutes to at least five minutes and authorizes election officials to allocate additional time in an equitable manner if the ballot is lengthy or complex.

HB 286 (Rep. Jones): Extends the early voting period from 18 days to seven days prior to an election rather than 14 days to seven days prior to an election.

HB 378 (Rep. Jenkins): Streamlines voter registration for people who are placed on probation but are not incarcerated.

✗ ULLA OPPOSES:

SB 224 (Sen. Cloud): Prohibits the use of ballot drop boxes. This bill unnecessarily creates barriers to voting.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

✓ ULLA SUPPORTS:

HB 46 (Rep. James): Citizens arrested for misdemeanors in Louisiana can spend up to 45 days in jail without even being charged with a crime. This legislation will reduce that to 5 days.

HB 68 (Rep. Landry): Bans solitary confinement for individuals with mental illness.

HB 84 (Rep. Marcelle): Authorizes certain persons no longer under an order of imprisonment or on probation or parole for a felony to serve on a jury in civil and criminal cases.

HB 106 (Rep. Carpenter): Requires a defense lawyer to advise a defendant of all consequences associated with a plea before a judge may enter that plea.

HB 145 (Rep. Bryant): Provides same good time release options to people sentenced between 1997 and 2008.

HB 196 (Rep. Jordan): (Constitutional Amendment) Removes the exception clause for slavery in the Louisiana State Constitution; Prohibits slavery and involuntary servitude in the state of Louisiana.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM continued

✓ ULLA SUPPORTS:

HB 248 (Rep. James): Decreases probation and parole fees for certain offenders

HB 254 (Rep. Nelson): Provides parole eligibility for all juveniles.

HB 271 (Rep. Marcelle): Creates a Transitional Residential Pilot Program for female offenders in the state of Louisiana

HB 430 (Rep. James): This bill decreases the number of days an officer can evade questioning and increases transparency by requiring sustained complaints about an officer to remain on file for at least ten years.

HB 490 (Rep. Duplessis): Grants parole eligibility for certain persons who have already served 30 years and who have been deemed to no longer pose a danger to the community.

HB 604 (Rep. James): The stigma of a criminal record too often leads employers to pass on otherwise qualified applicants. This bill makes it easier to remove criminal convictions from public records thus increasing employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.

HB 609 (Rep. Jordan): Prohibits qualified immunity defense that protects officers from civil liability for excessive force and/or death.

SB 16 (Sen. Peterson): Terminates the use of private prisons, for-profit prison contractors in Louisiana.

SB 34 (Sen. Fields): Increases police accountability. Requires any law enforcement agency that utilizes body worn cameras to have a policy regarding the activation and deactivation; requires any law enforcement motor vehicle that is equipped with a dash camera that has the technology to automatically record upon the activation of the motor vehicle's police emergency lights; prohibits the use of choke holds and carotid holds, with some exception; provides that no law enforcement officer shall seek, execute, or participate in the execution of a no-knock search warrant, except in specific cases.

✗ ULLA OPPOSES:

SB 69 (Sen. B Mizell): Creates the crime of aggravated distribution of a controlled dangerous substance as a crime of violence.



EDUCATION EQUITY

✓ ULLA SUPPORTS:

HB 60 (Rep. Brass): Extends the duration of the Dual Enrollment Framework Task Force, which will strengthen education opportunities for young people.

HB 136 (Rep. Carpenter): Provides relative to suspensions and expulsions of public school students, includes prohibiting suspension of students for uniform violations to apply to students in all grades (rather than just pre-K through 5th).

HB 304 (Rep. Lyons): Requires the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to coordinate and report data relative to early childhood care and education and to consider this data when allocating certain funding; also requires the creation of a program for providing instructional materials for home use.

HB 411 (Rep. Hughes): Provides a comprehensive revision of present law, applicable to all public schools, including charter schools; includes requirement for the Dept. of Education to publish data on disciplinary removals.

HB 635 (Rep. Glover): Provides that a course in African American History shall satisfy certain requirements relative to qualification for certain Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) awards.

SB 10 (Sen. Fields): Requires mandatory kindergarten attendance and requires compulsory school attendance beginning at age 5.

SB 211 (Sen. Jackson): Requires in-service training for teachers and certain other school personnel on adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed education.

✗ ULLA OPPOSES:

HB 494 (Rep. Mincey): Requires a written agreement between affected public school governing authorities and a parent for a student to attend the public school of his choice. Removes school performance letter grade and school capacity requirements. It appears as if these will be independent agreements for enrollment, attendance and transportation outside of a central enrollment system.

HB 564 (Rep. Garofalo): Provides relative to training with respect to certain concepts related to race and sex in elementary and secondary schools and postsecondary education institutions.

SB 86 (Sen. Foil): Requires the governing authority of each public school, including charter schools, to adopt policies relative to the installation and operation of cameras that record both video and audio in classrooms, upon the written request of a student's parent or legal guardian.



HEALTH EQUITY

✓ ULLA SUPPORTS:

HB 190 (Rep. Willard): Requires health insurance coverage for maternity services provided by certified nurse midwives, certified professional midwives, and doulas and further requires that Medicaid rates paid for health services delivered by midwives be at least equal to the Medicare rates for those services.

HB 468 (Rep. Landry): Provides relative to the extension of medicaid coverage for individuals experiencing postpartum; provide postpartum medicaid coverage to eligible pregnant individuals who qualify under the state's Medicaid plan, 1 year after the end of their pregnancy.

HB 598 (Rep. Green): Requires the La. Department of Health to apply for a Medicaid demonstration waiver to support and improve the delivery of inpatient mental health services; purpose is to secure additional funding for much-needed enhancements to the mental health treatment system and provide effective mental health care to individuals with serious mental illness.

HCR 16 (Rep. Hughes): Requests the La. Dept. of Health to study the impact of COVID-19 on the public sector workforce of this state and to report findings of the study to the legislature on or before Feb. 1, 2022.

SB 72 (Sen. Barrow): Creates the Office on Women's Health within the La. Dept. of Health.

SB 133 (Sen. Barrow): Provides relative to the prioritization of health equity by the La. Dept. of Health.

SB 215 (Sen. Barrow): Provides for the reasonable accommodations of employees who become temporarily disabled due to certain medical conditions



WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

✓ ULLA SUPPORTS:

HB 245 (Rep. Carpenter): Women in Louisiana suffer the third-highest pay gap in the nation. This bill prevents an employer from using wage history to determine an applicants' future pay and allows employees to openly discuss and compare pay, so the wage gap is no longer out of sight.

HB 299 (Rep. James): Increases the amount of the earned income tax credit from 5% to 10% and makes the 10% amount permanent.

HB 480 (Rep. Willard): Prohibits employment discrimination based on criminal history records and creates the Fair Chance Hiring Act. Everyone deserves a fair chance to work and support themselves and their families.

HB 659 (Rep. Willard): Establishes an income tax credit for taxpayers claiming a dependent less than eighteen years of age.

SB 7 and SB 49 (Carter and Peterson): Establishes a requirement that if the federal minimum wage is raised, the state minimum wage shall also be raised to that level. Louisiana ranks near the top in the number of people working for the federal \$7.25 minimum wage. Senators Troy Carter and Karen Carter Peterson's bills proposes graduate minimum wage increases that guarantee working people a living wage.



OTHER

✓ ULLA SUPPORTS:

HB 374 (Rep. Duplessis): Creates greater protections to renters who were evicted as a result of COVID, while also giving landlords more accurate information during the screening process.

HB 382 (Rep. Newell): Provides relative to race and national origin discrimination in education, employment, public accommodations, and housing opportunities. This bill is centered around the eradication of race-based hair discrimination: discrimination on the basis of African descendants' natural hair texture or protective hairstyles including braids, locs, twists or bantu knots.

HB 554 (Rep. Selders): Designates Juneteenth, June 19th, as a state holiday. Juneteenth is a holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States.

SB 105 (Sen. Boudreaux): Provides for the building of an African-American military service members monument in the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park.



USE YOUR VOICE

The Urban League of Louisiana encourages all residents to engage in the legislative process by contacting their legislators and the committees that are making decision on policies that impact our lives and communities.

How can I submit public comment?

Members of the public can **appear in person** to make a public statement during the meeting. You will be asked to complete a color-coded witness card to indicate your support for an item (green) or opposition (red). For more information on in-person appearances, please refer to this guide: house.louisiana.gov/H_Citizens/GeneralCitizensGuide.pdf

You can submit a statement in advance by **emailing members of a committee in advance**. You can check the posted agenda for a meeting to find the exact deadline to submit a prepared statement in advance. Comments are typically due the day prior to the committee meeting in order to be distributed to the committee members in advance.

How can I see what bills are schedule for a particular committee?

Visit <https://legis.la.gov/Legis/ByCmte.aspx> to see the upcoming meetings schedule and click on the meeting to see the agenda that will include the bills that will be heard.

How can I see who is serves on a committee and find their contact information?

Visit <https://legis.la.gov/Legis/Committees.aspx> to see what legislators are on each committee. It lists the members and links to their individual pages and also includes their contact information.

Additional Questions? Visit the official LA Legislative FAQ page -
<https://legis.la.gov/legis/HowDoI.aspx>



Urban League of
Louisiana

***Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.***

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