



Urban League
of Louisiana

2023

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

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Dear Constituents and Allies,

Approximately two weeks ago, the Louisiana State Legislature began its 2023 legislative session - which is a fiscal session impacting how the State's resources will be allocated. Consequently, we pen this letter to you with a spirit of enthusiasm and focus as the Urban League of Louisiana (ULLA) works to ensure that legislators are chiefly aware of how their proposed legislation impacts African Americans and other underserved communities within Louisiana. Additionally, ULLA, along with its many partners, continue to work to mitigate bills that would directly or indirectly harm you, while also seeking a pathway forward on laws that will increase the quality of life for all Louisianans, including protecting our democracy and voting rights, ensuring that our education and health systems are equitable and accurate, as well as championing efforts to close the racial wealth gap via career and economic development opportunities.

As a trusted community partner for the past eighty five (85) years, ULLA believes strongly that leadership requires transparency and that our constituents and allies deserve to know our stances regarding matters such as this year's Legislative Session. To that end, accompanying this letter is our 2023 Policy Priorities & State Legislative Agenda which articulates proposed bills we support and oppose. Please note that our process for determining which laws we're in favor of or against is informed by you and the lived experiences of your loved ones and community. It is with your interest in mind that we are supporting legislation such as HB 374 and SB 149, that seek to increase the state minimum wage rate, as well as HB 318, that aims to make our communities safer by prohibiting the manufacturing and possession of machines guns responsible for too many deaths in all communities of our state and country. Likewise, we oppose SB46 because it improperly empowers elected officials, outside of education, to regulate the materials taught in our schools. We firmly believe that education decisions impacting our students should be reserved for educational leaders and practitioners who serve our children and families. We cannot afford to politicize our children's education when we face so many challenges to improve outcomes and close education equity gaps.

Lastly, while ULLA is honored to advocate for you, we'd be remiss not to highlight that we prefer to be advocating alongside you, as we fight for a better Louisiana. While we highlight a lot of important information in our Agenda, none is more important than the ways you, our community experts and allies, can join us in this work! As the African proverb reminds us, "if you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together!"

We look forward to seeing all that we accomplished this year and beyond!

Yours in Service,



Judy Reese Morse
President & CEO



Tyronne B. Walker
Vice President for Policy, Strategic
Partnerships and Development

POLICY PRIORITIES

The Urban League of Louisiana's Policy Priorities serves as the Center for Policy and Social Justice's top focus areas when developing our programmatic efforts, seeking strategic partners, and delivering for our constituents through advocacy and policy change. ULLA is unapologetic in its assertion that elected officials can and must do more to positively affect Black and Brown communities within our seven (7) target cities and Louisianans as a whole. Moreover, while the reforms and resources needed to create lasting change are in many instances overdue, ULLA is clear-eyed in the reality that the transformations we are advocating for will be incremental. Consequently, ULLA is developing a multifaceted approach to impacting the following Policy Priorities - **Criminal Justice Reform**, where we're addressing structural and historic issues within the criminal justice systems; **Closing the Racial Wealth Gap**, via the SEE Change Collective which is a catalyst focusing on Blacks, Hispanics, and Latinos; **Education Equity**, focusing on student access to fair learning environments and teacher resources; **Health Equity**, through work to ensure that underserved communities have access to quality healthcare; **Safety**, programs protecting citizens from causes of danger, risk, or injury; **Voting Rights**, combating disenfranchisement and promoting uninhibited, informed participation in our democracy; and **Workforce & Economic Development**, strengthening minority businesses through increase access to capital and the expansion of apprenticeship programs that lead to careers.

ABOUT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Urban League of Louisiana is proud to release its Legislative Agenda for the 2023 Louisiana State Legislative Session. As a nonpartisan organization, the Urban League of Louisiana's Legislative Agenda is informed by its constituents residing within the League's seven target cities - Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, New Orleans, Monroe, and Shreveport - via its policy cycle. This includes featuring a statewide listening tour, policy conference, and policy work groups; Wake Up Geaux Vote; the production of education equity reports; health equity initiatives; criminal justice reform efforts; and legislative agenda during the Louisiana legislative session.

During the 2023 Regular Session, which convened on April 10, 2023 and concludes its final adjournment on June 6, 2023, legislators have filed approximately 621 prefiled bills, which our Center for Policy and Social Justice has reviewed in its entirety. However, while each of these prefiled bills has the ability to impact the lives of Louisianians, and should be reviewed by all Louisiana residents, the Urban League of Louisiana's 2023 Legislative Agenda is centered around the 29 prefiled bills proposed in the House and 20 bills proposed in the Senate we support. Likewise, we also highlight the 8 prefiled bills in House as well as the 6 prefiled bills in the Senate we oppose. The following bills, reviewed below, reflect the issues frequently impacting African Americans and other underserved communities and which concern the Urban League's mission to **secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights**.

SUPPORT **OPPOSE**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- HB24** (Newell)
Committee: Criminal Justice
Decriminalizes the sale and possession of marijuana and establishes a sales tax on the legal sales and distribution of marijuana, contingent upon a state approved regulatory system.
- HB 211** (Jordan)
Committee: Civil Law & Procedure
Removes and prohibits the exception for the use of slavery & involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime from the LA Constitution.
- HB 286** (Boyd)
Committee: Criminal Justice
Provides that a person may file a motion to expunge his record of arrest and conviction of a misdemeanor offense involving the possession of marijuana after 90 days from the date of conviction, while also being exempt from the payment of the processing fees.
- SB111** (Duplesis)
Committee: Senate Commerce
Allows for the expungement of records of arrest and misdemeanor and felony convictions in certain circumstances.

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- HB 103** (Muscarello)
Committee: Education
Adds Financial Literacy as a required course for high school students.
- HB 118** (Illg)
Committee: House Education
Requires one semester of instruction in personal financial management as a prerequisite to high school graduation.

- HB164** (Cox)
Committee: House Education
Lowers the minimum ACT score required for initial qualification for a TOPS-Tech Award from 17 to 15.
- HB 282** (Green)
Committee: House Education
Requires free school breakfast and lunch for public school students.
- HB375** (Carpenter)
Committee: House Education
Requires high performing charter schools to report results and best practices to local school systems.
- SB 204** (Hewitt)
Committee: Senate Education
Allows M.J. Foster Promise Program funds to be used for books and instructional materials making community and technical college training more accessible and affordable for low-income students.

HEALTH EQUITY

- HB 21** (Stagni)
Committee: House Education
Authorizes school boards to permit a school bus operator or other employee who has no remaining extended sick leave balance to take up to 30 additional days of extended sick leave for maternal and child health.
- HB 55** (Selders)
Committee: Criminal Justice
“The Mental Healing Justice for Incarcerated People Act.” Ensures both the access and delivery of quality care for individuals incarcerated within the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections that have mental health cases.
- HB 346** (Boyd)
Committee: Criminal Justice
Provides that the termination of a pregnancy by a physician where the conception of a child is the result of a sex offense, shall not be considered an abortion.

- ☑ **HB 461 (DuBuisson)**
Committee: Criminal Justice
Provides an exception for a medical procedure that treats a patient who has, in good faith medical judgment and certified in writing in the woman's medical record, been diagnosed with a complication that renders the pregnancy nonviable.
- ☑ **HB 549 (Glover)**
Committee: Criminal Justice
Provides exceptions for rape and incest victims under current abortion laws.
- ☑ **HB 598 (Newell)**
Committee: Criminal Justice
Provides that the removal of an ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy conception outside of the uterus) through surgery or treatment is not an abortion.
- ☑ **SB12 (Fields)**
Committee: Senate Education
Requires every college, university, elementary, middle, and high school to have an automated external defibrillator (AED) on its premises in an easily accessible location.
- ☑ **SB104 (Stine)**
Committee: Senate Insurance
Requires all health coverage providers in the state to include coverage for genetic testing for to diagnosis, treat, manage, or monitor a patient's disease and other medical conditions
- ☑ **SB177 (McMath)**
Committee: Senate Education
Requires the state Department of Education (LDOE) to publish a list of high-quality tutoring providers and that a parent be provided a written plan detailing the accelerated instruction that will be provided to the student.
- ☑ **SB135 (Barrow)**
Committee: Senate Finance
Requires La. Dept. of Health to implement a Medicaid reimbursement rate for midwife services and Medicaid to include midwives as managed care organization network providers in the Medicaid system.
- ☑ **SB200 (Duplessis)**
Senate: Labor & Industrial Relations
Doesn't allow employers to discriminate against employees who are absent from work due to genetic testing or a medically necessary cancer screening.

HISTORY & JUSTICE

- SB21** (Price)
Committee: Senate & Governmental Affairs
Names the DOTD headquarters building in Baton Rouge after Governor P.B.S. Pinchback.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- HB 162** (Willard)
Committee: House Ways & Means
Earned Income Tax Credit. Increases the amount of the state credit from 5% to 10% of the amount of the taxpayers' federal tax credit through Dec. 31, 2030.
- HB 180** (Willard)
Committee: House Commerce
Allows a housing provider to require a housing applicant to provide evidence of inaccuracies with the applicant's criminal history record, evidence of rehabilitation, or other mitigating factors.
- HB 596** (Freeman)
Committee: House Labor & Industrial Relations
Louisiana Family and Medical Leave Benefits Act. This bill would allow most workers to take paid leave for illness, birth & adoption.
- HB 620** (Freiburg)
Committee: Ways & Means
Imposes a tax on retail sales of cannabis and dedicates portions of the proceeds of the tax to the state general fund, the La. Early Childhood Education Fund, and the Justice System Funding Program.
- SB28** (Cathey)
Committee: Senate Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development
Requires the La. Agricultural Commodities Commission to adopt standards for sampling and grading grain of the United States Department of Agriculture.
- SB 106** (Smith)
Committee: Senate Insurance
Requires an insurer to permanently maintain certain records in connection to an insured's property damage insurance claim and made available to the insured upon request.

SAFETY

- HB 318** (Selders)
Committee: House Criminal Justice
Defines the terms “machine gun” and “manual reloading,” thus prohibiting the manufacture, transfer or possession of machine guns, with certain exceptions to U.S. or state department, agency & political subdivision.

- SB31** (Mizell)
Committee: Senate Judiciary B
Creates database to track human trafficking arrests, convictions, restitution, fines, and civil asset forfeiture.

- SB34** (Bernard)
Committee: Senate Transportation
Mandates that the National Suicide Prevention Hotline number is included on all state-issued driver’s license and personal identification cards and the home page of LA Wallet.

- SB169** (Mizell)
Committee: Senate Judiciary B
Requires law enforcement to submit every reported sexual assault collection kit to a forensic laboratory.

- SB 202** (Barrow)
Committee: Senate Education
Requires every college and university to have a memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and report incidents, campus security policies, and disclose campus crime statistics.

- SB212** (Duplessis)
Committee: Senate Judiciary C
Authorizes a district attorney or assistant district attorney to petition the court for the issuance of a warrant for the search and seizure of any firearm from persons who pose a risk of imminent injury to self or others.

- SB215** (Barrow)
Committee: Senate Judiciary C
Permits a person who is a victim of intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, human trafficking, or sexual assault to allege self-defense if criminally charged.

VOTING RIGHTS

- HB 316** (Phelps)
Committee: House Education
The first Tuesday after the first Monday in May annually shall be known as La. High School Seniors Voter Registration Day.

- HB 396** (Jenkins)
Committee: House & Governmental Affairs
Requires the registrar to reinstate the voter registration of a person whose registration was suspended following imprisonment if the person is no longer subject to suspension or provides documentation proving so.

- HB 449** (Willard)
Committee: House & Governmental Affairs
Provides for an Americans with Disabilities Act officer appointed by the secretary of state, a Voting Accessibility Advisory Group within the Dept. of State, and the instruction and examination of elections commissioners relative to the rights of voters with disabilities.

- HB 538** (Jenkins)
Committee: House & Governmental Affairs
Mandates the state to provide funding to launch the minimum number of early voting sites according to the population per capita in a parish.

- SB80** (Fields)
Committee: Senate & Governmental Affairs
Provides for transparency and community engagement in the redistricting process, including a local government holding at least two public hearings prior to the adoption of any redistricting plan.

WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- HB 40** (Boyd)
Committee: House Labor and Industrial Relations
Revises the employment discrimination laws to define gender identity and sexual orientation and add it to present law.

- HB 283 (LaFleur)**
Committee: House Labor and Industrial Relations
Prohibits an employer from discriminating, retaliating, or taking any adverse employment action against an employee, who inquires, discloses, compares, or otherwise discusses his wages, another employee's wages, or aids or encourages any other employee to exercise the same actions.

- HB 374 (Larvadain)**
Committee: House Labor and Industrial Relations
Establishes a state minimum wage rate that increases every two years and requires the state to mirror the federal minimum wage rate if it is increased.

- HB 420 (LaCombe)**
Committee: House Labor and Industrial Relations
Requires any employer who participates in an economic development program and receives fiscal benefits from the state for the construction of a new facility or the expansion of an existing facility to designate no less than 2% of the man-hours in any apprenticeable occupation to registered apprentices upon the approval of the director of apprenticeship for the LA Workforce Commission.

- HB 421 (LaCombe)**
Committee: House Labor and Industrial Relations
Requires any employer who is awarded a contract by the state to construct a capital project will designate no less than 2% of the man-hours in any apprenticeable occupation to registered apprentices upon the approval of the director of apprenticeship for the LA Workforce Commission.

- HB 426 (Bryant)**
Committee: House Ways and Means
Tax Credits: Provides tax credit for businesses that hire certain formerly incarcerated persons.

- SB93 (Bouie)**
Committee: Senate Labor and Industrial Relations
Requires that any contractor who enters into a contract with a public entity comply with the Louisiana Equal Pay for Women Act.

- SB148 (Carter)**
Committee: Senate Labor and Industrial Relations
Prohibits an employer from inquiring about or relying on the applicant's wage history.

SB149 (Carter)

Committee: Senate Labor and Industrial Relations

Increases the state minimum wage to \$10.00 per hour in 2023, \$12.00 per hour in 2026, and \$14.00 per hour in 2028.

SUPPORT **OPPOSE**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- HB 66** (Villio)
Committee: House Criminal Justice
Provides for forfeiture of good time and credits earned toward the reduction of sentence in certain circumstances

- HB 70** (Villio)
Committee: House Criminal Justice
Amends present law reducing the opportunity for the reduction of a sentence and parole eligibility for offenders convicted for a fourth or subsequent time of a nonviolent felony offense.








- HB 321** (Villio)
Committee: House Criminal Justice
Creates the Truth and Transparency in the Louisiana Criminal Justice System Pilot Program in Caddo, East Baton Rouge, and Orleans parishes exclusively.

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- HB 12** (Nelson)
Committee: House Education
Prohibits the promotion of certain students with reading deficiencies from the third grade, with exceptions to literacy screenings.

- SB46** (Abraham)
Committee: Senate Education
Allows government officials to review textbooks and other instructional materials which are not reviewed by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE).

SAFETY

-  **HB 96** (Thomas)
Committee: House Criminal Justice
Amends present law to change the penalty length of negligent homicide from five years to 20 years.
-  **HB 299** (McCormick)
Committee: House Criminal Justice
Creates the “Defense of the Second Amendment Act” and provides relative infringements on the right of a citizen to keep and bear arms.
-  **HB 464** (Fontenot)
Committee: House Criminal Justice
Proposed Law: Increases the minimum term of imprisonment for the possession of a firearm by a felon from five years to 10 years.
-  **SB54** (Morris)
Committee: Senate Judiciary C
Repeals law allowing law enforcement to issue a summons for misdemeanor offenses and instead requires an arrest for the same.
-  **SB130** (Morris)
Committee: Senate Judiciary B
Authorizes retired law enforcement officers and retired elected law enforcement department heads to carry concealed firearms.
-  **SB158** (Lambert)
Committee: Senate Education
Permits schools to hire school protection officers who are permitted to carry concealed firearms on school grounds.
-  **SB159** (Cathey)
Committee: Senate Judiciary B
Allows seventeen-year-olds (17) to be held and tried as adults under certain circumstances.

VOTING RIGHTS

 **HB 159** (Farnum)

Committee: House and Governmental Affairs

Requires the Dept. of State to conduct a supplemental annual canvas of registered voters.

 **SB23** (Bernard)

Committee: Senate and Governmental Affairs

Makes the Secretary of State the only official who can determine locations of alternative locations for early voting.

ACT NOW:

HOW WE CAN ALL ADVOCATE

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

How can I submit a public comment?

Members of the public can appear in person to make a public statement during committee meetings. You will be asked to complete a color-coded witness card to indicate your support for an item (green) or opposition (red). 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. To learn more about contacting your representatives [click here](#).

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

[Click here](#) 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 serves on a committee and find their contact information?

[Click here](#) to see what legislators are on each committee. It lists the members and links to their individual pages and also includes their contact information.

How can I advocate alongside the Urban League of Louisiana at the State Legislature?

[Join our coalition here](#).

Social Media Action

Post about your support or opposition to a bill on your social media accounts, tagging the appropriate legislators. You can also write a *Letter to the Editor* or submit an op ed to your local newspaper.

Additional Questions?

[Click here](#) to visit the official LA Legislative FAQ page.

GET IN TOUCH:

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