



Urban League of
Louisiana

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2026

urbanleaguela.org/2026agenda





<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FOR A	<i>SAFE</i>	LOUISIANA
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The perspectives reflected throughout this agenda are drawn from the Urban League of Louisiana’s statewide Listen & Learn Tours, conducted across multiple years, and represent the consistent voices and lived experiences of residents across Louisiana.



To Our Community, Partners, and Allies,

The outcomes we see across our state, poor health rankings, limited economic mobility, underperforming schools, and persistent public safety challenges, are not inevitable. They are the result of decisions made, and too often, decisions avoided. As the 2026 Legislative Session moves forward, we are confronted with a simple truth: if we want different outcomes, we must make different choices.

At the Urban League of Louisiana, our work is grounded in a clear objective to ensure that every Louisianian has a fair opportunity to live, work, build, and thrive. However, we must be truthful in our assessment that Louisiana does not lack talent or potential; it suffers from policy decisions that have failed to fully invest in its people.

This year, our legislative agenda is anchored in a clear vision: Safe Louisiana. Strong Louisiana. Smart Louisiana. These are not abstract ideals, they are the conditions required for a state where people can live with dignity, build with confidence, and fully participate in shaping their future. Together, they reflect our commitment to a Louisiana that works for all of us.

We must also be clear about what we are up against. This legislative session includes proposals that would shift power away from local communities, particularly New Orleans and other Black-led cities, while limiting access to opportunity for many across our state. These efforts threaten representation, weaken local governance, and silence voices that have too often been excluded from decision-making.

We cannot ignore that reality.

Policies that undermine local control or deepen inequality do not move Louisiana forward, they keep us tethered to the very conditions that have placed our state at the bottom of national rankings for far too long. But Louisiana has a choice.

We can continue chasing rhetoric about returning to a time when we were “great,” or we can do the harder, more meaningful work of building a stronger future defined by policies that support families, empower workers, protect rights, and invest in the next generation.

This agenda is both our commitment to that future and a call to action.

We invite residents across Louisiana to engage in these priorities, to speak up, and to stand with us in advancing policies that make our state safer, stronger, and smarter.

The Urban League of Louisiana continues to work alongside lawmakers, partners, and communities to move this vision forward.

Together, we can build a lasting Louisiana for you, for us, and for those to come.

Sincerely,



Judy Reese Morse
 PRESIDENT & CEO



Charles E.J. Phipps
 VICE PRESIDENT, POLICY,
 ADVOCACY & LEGAL AFFAIRS



Urban League of Louisiana

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SECTION I

Urban League Strategic Policy Initiatives



FOR A STRONG LOUISIANA

HB 1194 — FOOD FOR FAMILIES ACT

Author: Rep. Terry Landry Jr.

Bucket: Health Equity / Quality of Life

Position: Support

HB 1194 strengthens Louisiana’s approach to food access by requiring the state to identify, track, and actively eliminate food deserts. It shifts policy from passive funding to a coordinated, data-driven strategy that directs resources where they are most needed. For rural and urban communities, who disproportionately live in areas without access to fresh, affordable food, this is a direct intervention on health outcomes and economic stability. Expanding food access reduces chronic illnesses, supports families, and strengthens local economies. This is a foundational quality of life bill that improves both health and quality of life across the state.

“Inflation in all areas: food, housing, transportation, adequate, affordable, and accessible healthcare, has to be a priority.”

Lafayette Resident
Urban League Listen & Learn Tour



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FOR A STRONG LOUISIANA

HB 209 — FAIR PAY ACT

Author: Rep. Delisha Boyd

Bucket: Workforce Development / Quality of Life

Position: Support

HB 209 establishes a state minimum wage and gradually increases it over time, ensuring that workers earn wages that better reflect the cost of living. Louisiana currently has no state minimum wage, leaving many workers—disproportionately Black and low-income—stuck in poverty despite working full time. Increasing wages improves household stability, reduces reliance on public assistance, and strengthens local economies. This is a direct investment in working families and economic fairness. No one who works full-time should struggle to meet basic needs.

“Education in the areas of homebuying and financial literacy is paramount.”

Shreveport Resident
Urban League Listen & Learn Tour



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FOR A SAFE LOUISIANA

HB 1073 — CITIZENS WORK ACT

Author: Rep. Terry Landry Jr.

Bucket: Criminal Justice Reform / Workforce Development

Position: Support

HB 1073 ensures that individuals returning from incarceration receive critical documents, identification, and proof of certifications to help them secure employment. It also creates a “certificate of employability” to signal readiness to employers. One of the biggest barriers to reentry is not lack of willingness to work—it is lack of documentation and opportunity. This bill reduces those barriers and promotes successful reintegration. By supporting employment, it strengthens public safety, reduces recidivism, and restores dignity to returning citizens.

“[We must] increase apprenticeships and conduct an analysis to support the emerging workforce in vulnerable populations. This will increase what people can earn and their skills.”

New Orleans Resident
Urban League Listen & Learn Tour



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SB 596/HB 1133 — DREAM STARTER ACT (RESOLUTION)

Author: Sen. Sidney Barthelemy II & Rep. Dana Henry

Bucket: Housing / Generational Wealth / Quality of Life

Position: Support

This resolution aims to study how to create a First-Generation Homebuyer Assistance Program to help individuals and families overcome the financial barriers to purchasing a home. In Louisiana, homeownership remains one of the most powerful pathways to building generational wealth, yet Black families are significantly less likely to own homes due to systemic barriers. This bill directly addresses those disparities by providing financial support for first-time buyers. Expanding access to homeownership strengthens families, stabilizes neighborhoods, and helps close the racial wealth gap. It is a strategic investment in long-term economic mobility.

“Increasing minimum wage encourages people (including those with a criminal background) to work an honest and safe job, and helps with economy circulation since Black folk already spend [the most] towards the economy.”

Baton Rouge Resident
Urban League Listen & Learn Tour



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HB 1128 — SKILLS & PAYCHECKS ACT (RESOLUTION)

Author: Rep. Ed Larvadain III

Bucket: Workforce Development / Educational Equity

Position: Support

This resolution aims to understand expanding access to TOPS-Tech funding for individuals pursuing workforce training, apprenticeships, and high-demand career pathways. It also requires the state to track outcomes like wages and job placement, ensuring accountability and effectiveness. Many workers—particularly those from underserved communities—are excluded from traditional academic pathways but are well-positioned to succeed in skills-based careers. This bill creates a more inclusive workforce system that meets people where they are. It strengthens Louisiana’s economy while opening doors for workers to earn sustainable wages.

“Conducting an analysis of government-funded workforce development programs to assist accessibility to most vulnerable populations in its jurisdiction is essential because policy without data is a bad policy.”

Baton Rouge Resident
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COLLEGE WITHOUT DEBT COMMISSION (RESOLUTION)

Author: Rep. Ed Murray

Bucket: Educational Equity

Position: Support

This resolution aims to study and develop a plan for tuition-free public higher education, including student support services like housing, childcare, and transportation. Rising education costs continue to block access for low-income and first-generation students. This effort lays the groundwork for a system where education is a pathway to opportunity, not a source of lifelong debt. A stronger, more accessible education system benefits individuals, families, and the state's workforce.

“In order for us to feel good about ourselves, we need to be able to better support our households.”

Baton Rouge Resident
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HB 167 — REENTRY DOCUMENTATION AND CERTIFICATE OF EMPLOYABILITY

Author: Rep. Barbara Freiberg

Bucket: Criminal Justice Reform / Workforce Development

Position: Support

HB 167 requires the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to provide individuals leaving incarceration with critical documentation and identification needed to secure employment, including a state-issued ID and a “certificate of employability” for those who meet defined rehabilitation and readiness criteria. The bill ensures that preparation for reentry begins prior to release, streamlining access to identification, and formally recognizing individuals who have completed education, workforce training, and demonstrated good conduct. It also creates limited legal protections for employers who hire individuals with a certificate, helping to reduce one of the most persistent barriers to reentry, reluctance to hire returning citizens. By addressing both the practical and structural barriers to employment after incarceration, this bill advances public safety through stability. Individuals who are able to work, earn, and reintegrate successfully are significantly less likely to return to the justice system. A safe Louisiana requires policies that support successful reentry, reduce recidivism, and create real pathways to opportunity.

“Economics is the forefront of many things.”

Lake Charles Resident
Urban League Listen & Learn Tour



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SECTION 2

Urban League Supported Legislation



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HB 611 — PREGNANCY CENTER LICENSING

Author: Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman

Bucket: Health Equity

Position: Support

HB 611 requires pregnancy-related centers that provide healthcare services to be licensed and regulated by the Louisiana Department of Health. It ensures that facilities offering medical guidance meet basic standards of care, transparency, and accountability. Louisiana faces one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the country, with Black women disproportionately affected. Ensuring accurate information and safe services is critical to improving outcomes. This bill protects patients and promotes responsible healthcare practices.

“Access to low cost/affordable health programs
and preventative measure are critical to improving
physical and mental health.”

New Orleans Resident
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SB 157 — PAID PARENTAL LEAVE FOR EDUCATORS

Author: Sen. Samuel Jenkins

Bucket: Workforce / Quality of Life

Position: Support

SB 157 provides paid parental leave for eligible educators without requiring them to use existing leave balances. Teachers are essential to Louisiana's future, yet many are forced to choose between income and family needs. Paid leave supports teacher retention, family stability, and student continuity. It recognizes that strong schools require supported educators. This bill is both a workforce investment and a family-centered policy.

“Better pay, I feel, will trickle down and benefit all the other issues. We need teachers to begin with, and less people are choosing to enter the profession because they can make a better living elsewhere with less headaches.”

Lake Charles Resident
Urban League Listen & Learn Tour



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HB 269 — FREE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Author: Rep. Kyle M. Green, Jr.

Bucket: Educational Equity / Health

Position: Support

HB 269 ensures that students have access to free breakfast at school. Hunger is one of the most significant barriers to learning, affecting concentration, attendance, and academic performance. For many children, especially in low-income communities, school meals are essential. Providing universal breakfast improves educational outcomes and supports child health. This is a simple, high-impact policy that directly benefits students across Louisiana.

**“[Increase] funding for infrastructure.
Schools are deteriorating.”**

Alexandria Resident
Urban League Listen & Learn Tour



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HB 361 — VOTING RIGHTS RESTORATION

Author: Rep. Terry Landry Jr.

Bucket: Voting Rights

Position: Support

HB 361 simplifies the process for restoring voting rights to individuals who are no longer incarcerated. Many eligible voters are excluded from participation due to administrative barriers and confusion. This bill ensures that rights restoration is meaningful and accessible. Expanding voter participation strengthens democracy and ensures broader representation. Civic engagement is essential to a healthy and inclusive state.

“If you do your time, you should be able to find a job and vote when you come home.”

Alexandria Resident
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SB 365 — LOUISIANA VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Author: Sen. Royce Duplessis

Bucket: Voting Rights

Position: Support

SB 365 establishes a Louisiana Voting Rights Act, creating state-level protections to ensure fair and equal access to the ballot. The bill is designed to address barriers to voting that disproportionately impact Black voters, communities of color, and historically underserved populations. By strengthening protections against discrimination, improving oversight, and creating clearer standards for voting access, the legislation helps ensure that every eligible Louisianan can fully participate in the democratic process. A safe Louisiana requires not only physical security, but also the protection of fundamental rights, including the right to vote. This bill moves the state toward a more inclusive and representative democracy.

**“The biggest problem I see is
voter education and engagement.”**

Lafayette Resident
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HB 325 — EXPANDED TOPS-TECH ACCESS

Author: Rep. Ken Brass

Bucket: Workforce / Education

Position: Support

HB 325 expands eligibility pathways for the TOPS-Tech scholarship by allowing students to qualify through a combination of existing academic criteria and early college credit earned in high school. Specifically, the bill adds the completion of dual enrollment or other approved learning experiences as an additional pathway and allows students to meet any two of three eligibility criteria. This approach creates greater flexibility for students whose strengths may not be fully reflected in traditional testing metrics, while still maintaining academic standards. By recognizing multiple pathways to readiness, the bill better aligns Louisiana's education system with the diverse ways students learn and prepare for careers. This is a practical step toward making workforce-aligned education more accessible and responsive to student needs.

“Fear is generational. Our communities need
leadership who will fight for them.”

Lake Charles Resident
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HB 668 — PARTITION OF PROPERTY

Author: Rep. Nicholas Muscarello

Bucket: Generational Wealth/ Housing

Position: Support

HB 668 updates Louisiana’s laws governing the partition and sale of co-owned property by strengthening requirements around how these sales are conducted. The bill requires that property be sold for fair market value and that it be marketed in a commercially reasonable manner before a sale is ordered, helping to ensure that co-owners receive appropriate value for their property. It also allows for more flexible administration of partition sales, including permitting a co-owner to act as a court-appointed representative in certain circumstances. While the bill does not fully address the broader challenges associated with heir property and generational land loss, it introduces meaningful procedural improvements that can promote fairness and transparency in property sales. These changes represent a step toward protecting economic value for families navigating complex ownership situations.

“**[A] hallmark of wealth is homeownership.
Everyone didn’t go to a four-year college.”**

Monroe Resident
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SECTION 3

Urban League Opposed Legislation



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SB 35 — CRIMINALIZING “DISTURBING THE PEACE” AT PLACES OF WORSHIP, “DON LEMON LAW”

Author: Sen. William “Bill” Wheat Jr.

Bucket: Civil Rights

Position: Oppose

SB 35 creates a new criminal offense tied to conduct at places of worship. While framed as a safety measure, it risks being used to criminalize protest and suppress free expression. Laws with vague definitions of “disturbance” can be unevenly enforced and disproportionately impact marginalized communities. Public safety should not come at the expense of constitutional rights. This bill raises serious concerns about overcriminalization and selective enforcement.

“We need our legislators to recognize when the law is being weaponized against people seeking justice.”

Baton Rouge Resident
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HB 911 — ORLEANS PARISH COURT RESTRUCTURING

Author: Rep. Dixon McMakin

Bucket: Voting Rights/Governance

Position: Oppose

HB 911 restructures elements of the Orleans Parish court system. While presented as reform, it is part of a broader pattern of state-level efforts to reduce local control in New Orleans. Decisions about local institutions should be made with meaningful input from the communities they serve. Centralizing power away from local jurisdictions risks weakening accountability and representation. This bill undermines local self-determination.

**“Politicians need to be refreshed
and reminded of who they serve,
the people.”**

Monroe Resident
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HB 691 — LOUISIANA'S ADOPTION OF THE SAVE ACT

Author: Rep. Beau Beaulieu

Bucket: Safe Louisiana

Position: Oppose

HB 691 would require Louisiana to use the federal SAVE program to annually check voter registration records for potential noncitizens, investigate flagged individuals, and challenge or cancel registrations based on those findings. While framed as an election integrity measure, bills like this risk sweeping eligible voters into burdensome review or challenge processes because database mismatches and administrative errors are not uncommon. In practice, that can create barriers to participation, chill lawful voters, and disproportionately affect naturalized citizens, voters of color, and communities already vulnerable to disenfranchisement. Louisiana should protect election integrity, but it must do so without undermining access to the ballot or creating new pathways for wrongful voter removal. This bill moves too far in the direction of exclusion rather than inclusion.

“Our community doesn’t understand the system,
we need to be educated and informed on how ‘the
system’ should be working.”

New Orleans Resident
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HB 385 — TOPS SCHOLARSHIP REPAYMENT REQUIREMENT

Author: Rep. Dennis Bamberg Jr.

Bucket: Education Equity

Position: Oppose

HB 385 requires students to repay TOPS scholarship funds if they fail to maintain eligibility requirements. While accountability in public programs is important, this approach risks penalizing students who are already navigating financial hardship, academic challenges, or life circumstances beyond their control. For many students, particularly those from low-income and first-generation backgrounds, TOPS is a critical pathway to higher education. Converting that opportunity into potential debt exposure may discourage enrollment, increase dropout risk, and disproportionately impact students who have the least margin for error. A smarter Louisiana expands access to education and supports student success; it does not create additional financial barriers that undermine it.

“The direct contact to the future leaders of the world [students], and those who are in charge of their education, needs to be respectful and transparent.”

Baton Rouge Resident
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SB 269 — “CHARLIE KIRK SUCCESS SEQUENCING ACT”

Author: Sen. Rick Edmonds

Bucket: Educational Equity

Position: Oppose

SB 269 introduces a politically driven framework for defining “success” in education. Rather than focusing on evidence-based strategies to improve outcomes, it imposes ideological narratives that may not reflect the realities of Louisiana’s diverse student population. Education policy should be inclusive, data-driven, and responsive to community needs—not shaped by national political agendas. This bill risks narrowing educational priorities and marginalizing students.

“We need a long-term strategy to beat back extreme policies in the state that negatively impact the Black community.”

Shreveport Resident
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SB 197, SB 217, SB 256 — NEW ORLEANS GOVERNANCE CHANGES

Author: Sen. Jay Morris

Bucket: Voting Rights/Governance

Position: Oppose

These bills collectively reshape governance structures in Orleans Parish, including courts and administrative roles. While each bill addresses different mechanisms, together they represent a coordinated effort to shift power away from New Orleans. These changes risk reducing local representation and altering institutions without sufficient community input. Policies affecting local communities should be driven by those communities. These bills raise serious concerns about equity and democratic governance.

“What we can’t legislate,
 we will litigate.”

Baton Rouge Resident
 Urban League Listen & Learn Tour



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HB 926 — LIMITS PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTIONS

Author: Rep. Mike Bayham

Bucket: Health Equity

Position: Oppose

HB 926 restricts the ability of institutions to implement public health protections related to vaccinations. Public health decisions should be guided by medical expertise and community safety, particularly during emergencies. Limiting these tools can increase risk for vulnerable populations, including those with underlying health conditions. Strong public health systems protect everyone. This bill weakens those protections.

“We all know that currently healthcare (and the adequate accessibility thereto) is not in our favor. Who, better than our own, understands our plights.”

Baton Rouge Resident
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HB 68 / SB 306 — WORSHIP-RELATED CRIMINAL PENALTIES

Author: Rep. Laurie Schlegel & Sen. Rick Edmonds

Bucket: Civil Rights

Position: Monitor - Likely Oppose

These bills are similar in scope to SB 35 and expand criminal penalties related to conduct at places of worship. While framed as safety measures, they raise similar concerns about overbreadth and potential misuse. Their impact will depend on final language and enforcement provisions. These bills should be closely monitored for civil liberties implications.

“ Many of these [priorities] are equally important and urgent. However, how do we get a white Republican Louisiana to get on board?”

Monroe Resident
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Act Now: How We Can All Advocate

Urban League of Louisiana implores all residents to engage in the legislative process by contacting their legislators and bill committee members.

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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