

LOUISIANA POLICY GUIDE FOR EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY





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FORWARD

Historically, there has been little strategic investment in progressive advocacy and public policy in Louisiana. Before Hurricane Katrina, the power to change policy was monopolized by an intricate web of gatekeepers, power brokers, and lobbyists. In order to effectively reform old systems, public policy must become more knowledge-based and connected to the circumstances of vulnerable communities and those leaders elected to serve them.

The nonprofit advocacy infrastructure in Louisiana is now more robust than ever. Following Hurricane Katrina, infrastructure was built to accommodate the magnitude of the needs facing the state. There is now considerable bench strength across the state that continues to grow. Collectively, we hope to prove that the state of Louisiana can overcome its political and structural barriers to systemic demonstrate that leadership, equity and justice are concretely possible.

The Power Coalition is building an integrated civic engagement strategy that amplifies the voices of those who have historically been ignored and organizes them into a unified movement centered on an agenda of shared issues. This agenda is grounded in the work of our diverse organizations, reflects our shared set of values, and resonates with a broad spectrum of Louisianans.

This Policy Guide chronicles our advocacy efforts and lays out an agenda steeped in community voice to build a pathway for change. We hope that this Policy Guide becomes a tool used by community and policy makers to discuss strategic investments and state policy alignment focused on providing equity and opportunity to all Louisianans.

Sincerely,



Ashley K. Shelton

Executive Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the organizations that have anchored and led much of the work outlined in this guide. We would also like to thank the following individuals who were interviewed during the process of developing the Louisiana Policy Guide for Equity and Opportunity:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED TO EMPOWER EVERYDAY CITIZENS IN LOUISIANA TO ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES AND THE ISSUES THEY CARE ABOUT.

The Power Coalition is a statewide civic engagement table in Louisiana that shifts power back to the people, fights policies that hurt our state's families, and increases voter participation by building support structures for community activism. We believe that the people closest to the problem are closest to the solution, that government should be accountable to citizens for its actions, and that intersectionality is mandatory in policy advocacy.

We lift up policies in the areas of Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Economic Opportunity and Work, and Civic Engagement from an equity and opportunity lens. Most policies included in guide were introduced during the 2017 legislative session. Some of these policies help achieve equity and opportunity in the state, and have therefore been supported by the Power Coalition and its members. Other policies have posed a threat to equity and opportunity in Louisiana, and have therefore required advocates and citizens to fight together to stop them.

In **Criminal and Juvenile Justice (page 8)**, the policies that advance equity and opportunity ban the box for public colleges (HB 688), expand the application of domestic abuse protections (HB 223), and require anti-bias training for law enforcement (HB 277).

The negative policies increase the fee for parole supervision paid by parolees to parole officers (HB 302) and limit the ability of citizens to record public officials performing duties (HB 279).

In **Economic Opportunity and Work (page 2)**, the positive policies provide for an increase in the state minimum wage (SB 153), require pay equality for employees in the state regardless of sex (HB 384), eliminate restrictions on eligibility for SNAP for people with drug convictions, and raise the minimum wage for city-contracted work (New Orleans City Ordinance No. 30550). The policies that impede equity and opportunity create a work requirement for Medicaid eligibility (SB 188), remove the ability of cities to require affordable housing in new development projects (SB 162), and penalize cities with sanctuary policies (HB 525 and 676).

In **Civic Engagement (page 12)**, policies that advance equity and opportunity re-enfranchise citizens on probation and parole (HB 229 and 235) and redistribute district voting power to incarcerated individuals' home communities (HB 228). The negative policy included in this guide restricts the eligible waivers that voters can use instead of photo ID at the polls (HB 565).

This guide ends with the People's Agenda for Louisiana. The People's Agenda is a collection of policy ideas, originating in and ground truthed by the marginalized communities that we serve throughout the state. The People's Agenda builds on of the foundations of the advocacy and organizing work described in this guide and outlines the priorities of The Power Coalition as we fight for equity and opportunity in the years to come.



ABOUT THE POWER COALITION

THE POWER COALITION IS A STATEWIDE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TABLE IN LOUISIANA THAT SHIFTS POWER BACK TO THE PEOPLE,

fights policies that hurt our state's families, and increases voter participation by building support structures for community activism. We operate always with an intention to bring the voices of our constituents to the forefront, to make the state of Louisiana a case study for how to end poverty through innovative policy, civic engagement, and adequate resources, to create hope for communities by lifting up a vision of equity, voice and power. Our support of community-driven activism and grassroots leadership development empowers citizens to address classism, racism, and other marginalization in their own lives and communities instead of having their voices ignored in the traditional, top-down structures of power.

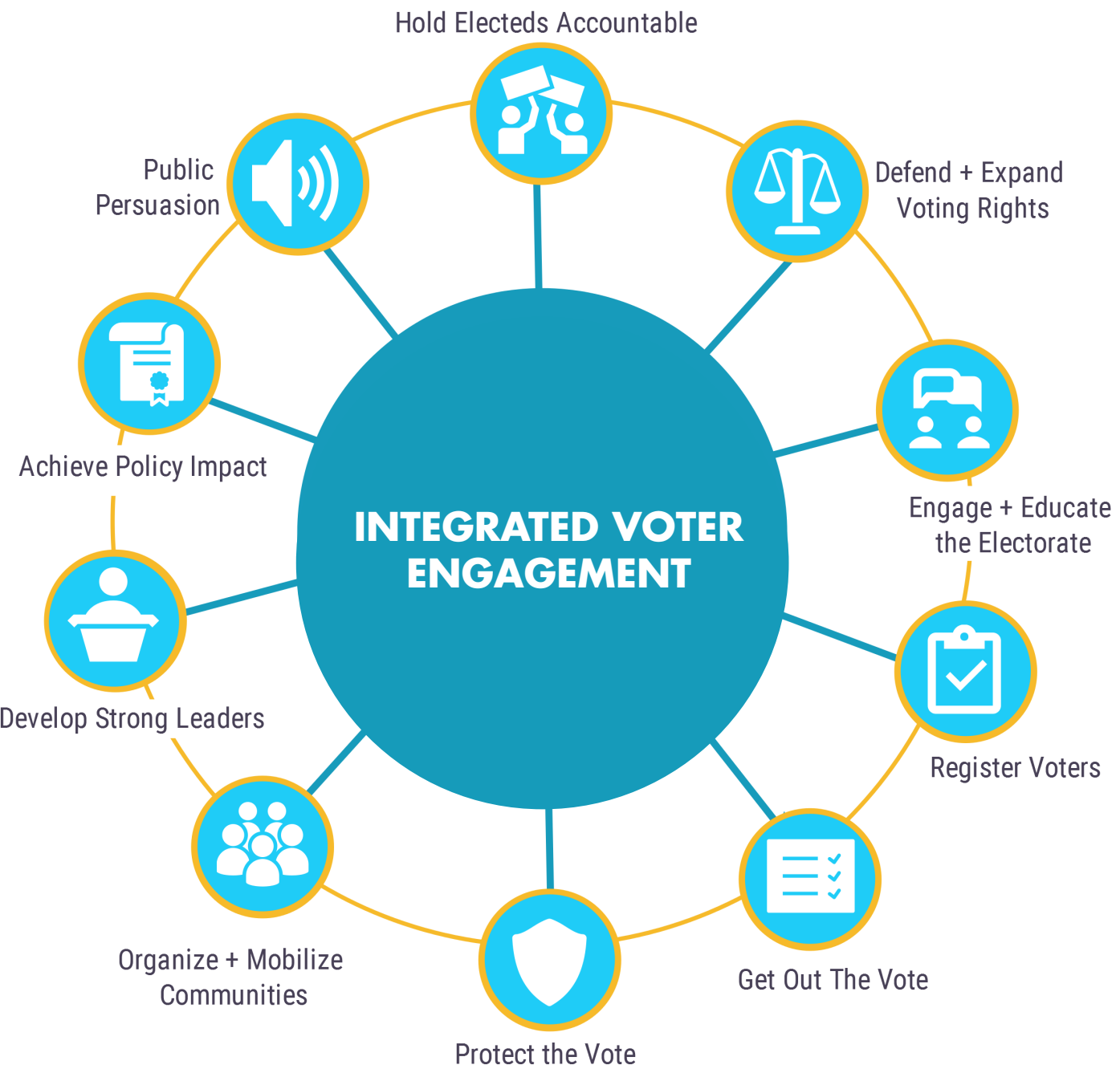


As a coalition, we recognize that we need to work collectively to realize systemic change. Composed of a diverse cross section of base-building community organizations and issue specialties, the Power Coalition breaks down functional barriers between communications, research, policy, organizing, and voter education initiatives. We pool resources and expertise to build capacity and develop leaders statewide. Since 2015, we have been working together to build a plan for strategic investments and state organizational alignment.

Power Coalition member organizations are united in pursuing the following five-year goals through 2020:

1. Increasing voting accessibility
2. Educating legislators and gaining their support for the People's Agenda
3. Ensuring that community voice is included in the state redistricting process
4. Mobilizing 315,000 new voters

WE UNDERSTAND THAT BUILDING LONG-TERM POWER FOR COMMUNITIES
REQUIRES A MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH.



Credit to Funders’ Committee for Civic Participation.

The Power Coalition is anchored by the following groups that have intentionally situated our work within a shared frame to become intentional and strategic in order to realize a true paradigm shift. We are grateful for their leadership and support as we have sought to fight for system change:

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF THE POWER COALITION INCLUDE:

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF LOUISIANA'S INCARCERATED CHILDREN - A Louisiana advocacy and policy organization that fight for youth and their families affected by the criminal justice system.

<http://www.fflic.org> | 504.708.8376

GREATER NEW ORLEANS HOUSING ALLIANCE - A collaborative of nonprofit housing builders and community development corporations advocating for the preservation and production of affordable housing in the Greater New Orleans area.

<http://gnoha.org> | 504.224.8300

THE JEREMIAH GROUP - A broad-based, faith-based community organization that does nonpartisan organizing in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes.

<https://www.facebook.com/TheJeremiahGroup/>

LOUISIANA BUDGET PROJECT - Works to make Louisiana government transparent and accountable to all Louisiana citizens by monitoring and reporting on public policy and how it affects Louisiana's low- to moderate-income families. The Budget Project holds work on providing budget analysis to inform our advocacy strategies.

STAND WITH DIGNITY - A grassroots membership organization of structurally unemployed and underemployed Black workers dedicated to building career ladders for workers who have been locked out of work in the redevelopment of New Orleans and fighting for first class citizenship of workers in New Orleans.

CONGRESS OF DAY LABORERS/CONGRESO DE JORNALEROS

- an organization of immigrant workers and families founded by the day laborers who helped rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, developing a leadership pipeline for hundreds of immigrant workers and families into public life and social movement participation.

<http://nowcrj.org> | 504.309.5165

VAYLA NEW ORLEANS - A multi-racial community-based organization in New Orleans that empowers youth and families through organizing and leadership development, primarily led by African-American, Latino, Vietnamese, & LGBTQ youth.

<http://www.vayla-no.org> | 504.253.6000

VOICE OF THE EXPERIENCED - A grassroots, membership based organization founded and run by Formerly Incarcerated Persons (FIPs) in partnership with allies dedicated to ending the disenfranchisement and discrimination against of FIPs.

<http://www.vote-nola.org> | 504.571.9599

WOMEN WITH A VISION - Works to improve the lives of marginalized women, their families, and communities by addressing the social conditions that hinder their health and well-being. They accomplish this through relentless advocacy, health education, supportive services, and community-based participatory research.

<http://wwav-no.org> | 504.301.0428



PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The Power Coalition designed this guide as a toolkit to empower everyday citizens to advocate for themselves and the issues that they care about. This guide is also intended for nonprofit advocates, state lawmakers and those from outside the state who are interested in learning more about how policy that advances equity and opportunity can be moved in Louisiana. Each section of the guide includes contextual factors that illuminate the unique conditions of that issue area in Louisiana, key policies that the Power Coalition members have fought to pass or kill, and the Power Coalition's ideas for how the state could move forward with progressive policies. Case studies illustrate the approaches that advocacy groups have taken to fight inequitable policies--including filing court cases, making political alliances, and providing direct services.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN USE THE GUIDE FOR:

GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM: The "About the Power Coalition" section at the beginning of this guide provides contact information for the coalition members. Joining with other community members to protest government bodies gives people the power and platform to tell their own story about the issues in their community.

CALLING REPRESENTATIVES: Because of their concerns about re-election, politicians care about the opinions of their constituency and will acknowledge advocacy coming from a significant voter block. Appendix A of this guide shows how each state representative voted on each of the policy issues included in this guide and gives their phone number. Call your representative and tell them what you think about their vote.

VOTING: The most powerful way to understand policy in Louisiana is to know how legislators voted to support or defeat a legislation. Use Appendix A to research the

voting history of your elected legislators and decide if you would like them to represent you for another term.

HOW WE DEFINE "EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY"

We define "equity" as the inclusion of everyone in society and the creation of systems that allow each individual to reach their full potential.¹ In an equitable society, everyone is provided with access to what they need in order to be successful. Because each person's needs and definition of success is different, equitable communities, cities, and countries are prepared to provide more supports to those who are in greater need or who have traditionally been deprived of their needs.

We define "opportunity" as unimpeded access to full citizenship and its benefits, such as jobs with living wages, good public schools, healthy food, clean water, and safety. While the benefits of citizenship vary from one city or state to another, there are groups of people everywhere who enjoy greater access to these benefits than others. In order to encourage equity, political leaders must ensure that all individuals, regardless of their race, gender, sexuality, or immigration status, have access to social, economic, and political opportunity.

1. Blackwell, Angela Glover. "The Curb-Cut Effect." Stanford Social Innovation Review. Stanford University, 2016. Web. 27 July 2017. <https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_curb_cut_effect>.

CORE PRINCIPLES

This guide was developed with several key principles in mind:

1. **THE PEOPLE CLOSEST TO THE PROBLEM ARE CLOSEST TO THE SOLUTION.** Those who are directly affected by harmful policies and inequitable systems should lead the movement for change. For example, people who were formerly incarcerated are the experts on what changes must be made to increase their opportunities for employment, access to housing, and voice in civil society.
2. **GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ACCOUNTABLE TO CITIZENS FOR ITS ACTIONS.** The Louisiana Constitution states that government is intended exclusively to “secure justice for all, preserve peace, protect the rights, and promote the happiness and general welfare of the people.”² It also asserts that government is founded on the will of the people, and therefore is responsible to the people in all that it does. Citizens have the opportunity to vote for candidates who represent their interests, and can also make their voices heard on policy issues to ensure that elected officials make decisions that protect the people’s interests.
3. **INTERSECTIONALITY IS MANDATORY IN POLICY ADVOCACY.** Effective advocacy requires working together across issue and policy areas. This guide is one example of this principle: there are policies included in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice section of this guide that could have easily been included in the Economic Opportunity or Civic Engagement sections. Power is built by uniting across groups and issue areas to advocate for policies that affect the lives of citizens.



2. State of Louisiana. “Article I: Declaration of Rights.” State Constitution of 1974. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 July 2017. <<http://senate.la.gov/Documents/Constitution/Article1.htm#§1>. Origin and Purpose of Government>.

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



START WITH AN IDEA

Start with an idea and draft language for a bill



INTRODUCE BILL TO COMMITTEE

Bill introduction to committee: introduce bill, assign to committee



HOUSE COMMITTEE

House committee: Public hearings and testimony; Debate and vote



HOUSE FLOOR

House floor: Debate and vote



SENATE

Bill introduction in senate: Introduce bill; Assigned to committee



SENATE COMMITTEE

Senate committee: Public hearings and testimonies; Debate and vote



SENATE FLOOR

Debate and vote



CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Debate and vote



GOVERNOR

Sign or veto



THE POWER COALITION AND PARTNERS' WORK

UNDERSTAND PRIORITIES

Community listening, polling, and meeting with constituents to understand their priorities



SHARE DATA WITH COMMUNITY

Sharing information with community members about legislation under debate in the current legislative session



SHARE DATA WITH LAWMAKERS

Sharing data with lawmakers to help them understand their constituents' priorities



COORDINATE

Coordinating advocacy efforts led by community members on specific policies



IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR

Monitoring implementation of new policies and holding government representatives accountable for their decisions

ENSURING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: SHACKLE-FREE LABOR AND DELIVERY

After a positive law has been passed, the fight for equity and opportunity isn't over. Once an idea is signed into law, advocates and citizens must continue to work for full implementation of the new policy. Shackling pregnant mothers during labor is an example of a cruel, inequitable practice that has persisted even after it was banned by law. The Louisiana Legislature enacted the Safe Pregnancy for Incarcerated Women Act in 2012 to prohibit the use of restraints on incarcerated pregnant women during labor and delivery.³ The Department of Corrections (DOC) changed its policies to better align with the new law, but these policies were vague compared to the state legislation. Advocates found that delivery room shackling continued in many facilities due to that lack of clarity. Lift Louisiana, a women's advocacy group and member of the Power Coalition, is now conducting an analysis of the enforcement of the Safe Pregnancy for Incarcerated Women Act and is developing recommendations for parish prisons to update their procedures to comply with the law. Lift Louisiana is also educating public defenders about the rights of pregnant mothers who are incarcerated in the state. Advocates must fight for implementation of equitable laws even after the legislators have gone home.

3. Thibodeaux, Torrie. "Shackling Pregnant Women in Louisiana Prisons: Part 1." Lift Louisiana. Lift Louisiana, 10 Feb. 2017. Web. 27 July 2017. <<http://liftlouisiana.org/updates/shackling-pregnant-women-louisiana-prisons-part-1>>.

A photograph of a community meeting or town hall. In the foreground, a man with dreadlocks and a beard sits in a chair, looking towards the left. Next to him, a woman with blonde hair and glasses also looks left. Behind them, a man wearing a bandana and a t-shirt with a graphic of a person holding a sign stands and points towards the seated group. Other people are visible in the background, some standing and some seated. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'PRIMER ON LOUISIANA' is overlaid in the center.

PRIMER ON LOUISIANA



“WHEN YOU GET INTO LOUISIANA, IT REALLY IS LIKE A DIFFERENT COUNTRY IN A LOT OF WAYS,”

actor Sam Trammell once said about his home state.⁴ While he was referring to weeping willows, cypress trees, and humid evenings, the statement also reflects Louisiana’s particular cultural, historical, and demographic influences. While every state in the U.S. is distinct in its own right, Louisiana’s history as a former French colony with heavy African, Native American, Caribbean, and European cultural influences makes it singularly unique. Louisianians have also faced devastating natural and man-made disasters in the recent years, including Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the Deep Water Horizon oil spill in 2010.⁵ These tragedies

put in stark relief that Louisiana has never prioritized the wellbeing of their marginalized communities and that community change cannot be accomplished through a top-down approach to policy-making; a paradigm shift in the fight for equity and opportunity is necessary. Louisiana’s citizens advocate for policy change within a political context that may surprise folks from outside of the state. We’ve highlighted several considerations that shape how organizing, advocacy, and policymaking happen within Louisiana.

⁴ Lacher, Irene. “The Sunday Conversation: Sam Trammell.” Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles Times, 26 June 2011. Web. 27 July 2017. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jun/26/entertainment/la-ca-conversation-20110626>>.

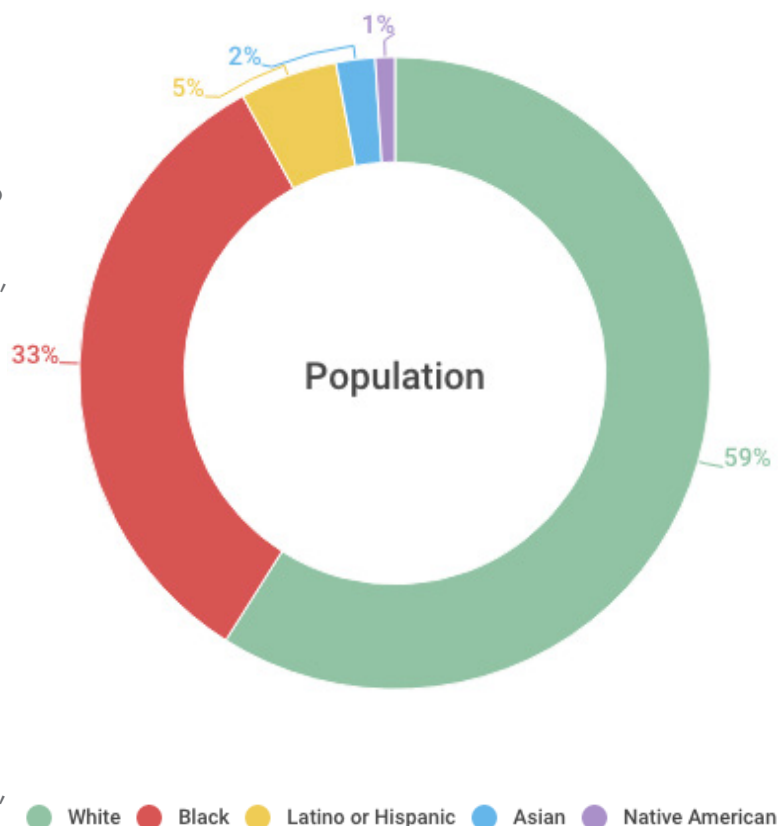
⁵ Bureau of Health. “Louisiana Rural Health Plan 2011-2015.” Louisiana Department of Health. Louisiana Department of Health, 2015. Web. 28 July 2017. <<http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/assets/oph/pcrh/LARuralHealthPlanWEB.pdf>>.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND POPULATION DENSITY

According to 2016 estimates, the population of Louisiana is 59% white, 33% Black, 5% Latino or Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 1% Native American.⁶

Approximately one-third of the state's population of 4.6 million resides in the five most populous parishes in the state, one-third reside in the 50 least populous parishes, and one-third reside in the remaining nine parishes.⁷ More than half of the parishes in Louisiana (34 of 65) are considered rural.⁸ In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, there has been a strong tradition of political organizing as advocacy groups in the urban areas of South Louisiana have struggled to fight for equity in the recovery process. Progressive voice has been largely relegated to urban areas of the state. In the 2016 Presidential elections, the parishes in which the majority voted Democrat were largely clustered around the major metropolitan areas of New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Shreveport, and in the three majority-Black, rural parishes of Northeast Louisiana (East Carroll, Madison, and Tensas Parishes).⁹

Louisiana is the third-poorest state in the country¹⁰ and 42% of all of Louisiana's families cannot afford basic living expenses. Rates of poverty are even higher in majority-Black parishes in both rural and urban areas.¹¹ However, majority-white, rural parishes throughout Louisiana face similar financial hardships shared by the state's Black communities. More than two-thirds of rural parishes in the state (24 of 34) are defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as persistent poverty parishes, or parishes where over 20% of the population lived below the federal poverty line in 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000.¹² Twenty-two percent of the adult population in rural Louisiana has not completed high school, and 7.6% suffer from unemployment.¹³ Rural, impoverished white voters--like their fellow Louisianans of color--would benefit from access to good jobs with a living wage, better public education, and affordable health care.



6 United States Department of Commerce. "Quickfacts: Louisiana". United States Department of Commerce, 2016. Web. 2 August 2017. <<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/LA>>.

7 Cubit Planning. "Louisiana Counties by Population". Louisiana Demographics by Cubit, 2016. Web. 2 August 2017. <https://www.louisiana-demographics.com/counties_by_population>

8 United States Department of Commerce. "Quickfacts: Louisiana". United States Department of Commerce, 2016. Web. 2 August 2017. <<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/LA>>.

9 Sayre, Katherine. "See How Louisiana Voted in the 2016 Presidential Election." NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 9 Nov. 2016. Web. 2 August 2017.

10. Bertrand, Natasha. "The 10 Poorest States In America." Business Insider, Business Insider, 17 Dec. 2014, <www.businessinsider.com/the-10-poorest-states-in-america-2014-12>.

11. Louisiana Association of United Ways, "ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Report; Louisiana; Study of Financial Hardship, United Way, 2016, <https://issuu.com/louisianaassociationofunitedway/docs/16uw_alice_report_laupdate_released?e=22574709/46792946>

12 United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. "Persistent Poverty 2013". United States Department of Agriculture, 2013. Web. 2 August 2017. <<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/RD-PersistentPovertyCountiesList2016.pdf>>

13 Rural Health Information Hub. "Louisiana." Rural Health for Louisiana Introduction, Rural Health Information Hub, 26 Apr. 2016. Web. 2 August 2017. <www.ruralhealthinfo.org/states/louisiana>

POWER OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Governor John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, serves as the 56th and current governor of the state of Louisiana.¹⁴ Governors of the state have traditionally exercised unusually strong influence over the state lawmaking process. While some of this power has been granted by the state constitution, much of it comes from a political tradition of pageantry and custom that has afforded a great degree of deference to the governor's position.¹⁵ The Louisiana governor has the constitutional power to veto anything appearing as a line-item within a bill.¹⁶ Traditionally, the governor has also enjoyed the privilege of choosing the speaker of the State House of Representatives, giving the governor major sway in setting the legislative agenda. In 2016, however, a Republican-majority legislature broke with custom by disregarding the recently elected Governor Edwards' speaker candidate and instead electing their own Republican candidate. This was a major blow to Edward's capability as governor and has made it difficult for policymakers to pass progressive legislation during the course of his governorship.

NAPOLEONIC LAW

While the other 49 states in the U.S. use common law derived from the British system, Louisiana has a civil law system, also known as Napoleonic Law, due to its history as a French colony. Napoleonic law establishes a uniform code for the entire state. This gives state policy supreme authority (or preemption) over city or parish law. Many issues such as zoning, employment, immigration, and the environment have specific and localized impacts that affect low-income people, people of color, women, immigrants, LGBT people, and other vulnerable communities.¹⁷ The state's preemption can make it difficult for cities and parishes to pass laws in the best interest of their local communities because they must follow state policy, even when local communities do not reap positive benefits from state law.¹⁸

Preemption in Louisiana can lead to less equity and opportunity, especially when state legislatures do not proportionately represent the demographics and/or interests of certain communities.¹⁹

Unlike any other state or federal courts, judicial officials in Louisiana cannot cite past court rulings as the primary basis for their decisions. They must ground their rulings in their own individual interpretation on the law's intent. Because they are not as pressured to follow past decisions, Louisiana's courts can operate with more autonomy than those in other states.²⁰

13 Rural Health Information Hub. "Louisiana." Rural Health for Louisiana Introduction, Rural Health Information Hub, 26 Apr. 2016. Web. 2 August 2017. <www.ruralhealthinfo.org/states/louisiana>

14 "Meet the Governor." Official Seal of the State of Louisiana, Office of the Governor. <gov.louisiana.gov/page/meet-the-governor>

15 Parent, W. Inside the Carnival: Unmasking Louisiana Politics. Louisiana State University Press, 2004.

16 National Conference of State Legislature. "Gubernatorial Veto Authority With Respect to Major Budget Bill(s)." NCSL.org, National Conference of State Legislature, Dec. 2008. Web. 2 August 2017. <<http://www.ncsl.org/research/fiscal-policy/gubernatorial-veto-authority-with-respect-to-major.aspx>>

17 Lee, Allie. "Pain of State Preemption Felt by the South's Vulnerable Communities." Louisiana Weekly, 18 Apr. 2017. Web. 2 August 2017.

<<http://www.louisianaweekly.com/pain-of-state-preemption-felt-by-the-souths-vulnerable-communities/>>

18 Boutwell, Steven. "Louisiana Appeals Court Acknowledges Preemption of State Law Over Parish Zoning Ordinances in Fracking Fight." Louisiana Law Blog, Kean Miller, LLP Attorneys at Law, 11 Mar. 2016. Web. 2 August 2017. <www.louisianalawblog.com/uncategorized/louisiana-appeals-court-acknowledges-preemption-state-law-parish-zoning-ordinances-fracking-fight/>

19 Lee, A. "Pain of State Preemption Felt by the South's Vulnerable Communities." Louisiana Weekly, 18 Apr. 2017. Web. 2 August 2017.

<<http://www.louisianaweekly.com/pain-of-state-preemption-felt-by-the-souths-vulnerable-communities/>>

20 Engber, D. "Louisiana's Napoleon Complex: The French Influence on Pelican State Jurisprudence." Slate.com, Slate, 12 Sept. 2008:59. Web. 2 August 2017. 05, 1 <http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2005/09/louisianas_napoleon_complex.html>

LOUISIANA'S STATE CONSTITUTION AND BUDGET LIMITATIONS

Louisiana's current constitution was adopted in 1974 by statewide vote after a constitutional convention the preceding year. Nearly two-thirds of the state's budget is guaranteed by the constitution, leaving the remaining one-third vulnerable to cuts.²¹ Because healthcare and higher education are not constitutionally protected, funding for these programs is constantly in flux and the governor is virtually required to target them for budget cuts each year.²²

Given that so many controls on taxes and government spending are sealed in the 1974 constitution, House Bill 456 was introduced during the 2017 legislative session to propose a new constitutional convention for 2019. The bill required a supermajority of 70 votes to pass. It failed with 50 votes in favor and 45 against in the House of Representatives, closing the door to a constitutional overhaul.²³

Louisiana will face a fiscal cliff on July 1st, 2018, when close to \$1.5 billion in temporary tax measures will fall off the books.²⁴ Lawmakers must account for this impending deficit and fix the state's chronic budget problems by rebuilding the tax system. Due to the state's regressive sales tax and low personal income tax, Louisiana's poorest 40% of families pay twice the effective tax rate as the richest 1% of families. Ending the state deduction for federal income taxes and the ability to deduct excess federal itemized deductions on state returns would help avoid the 2018 fiscal cliff. It would also allow lawmakers to bring the sales tax back down from 9 to 4%.²⁵ Lawmakers failed to reform Louisiana's tax structure during the 2017 legislative session. It is now absolutely crucial that the state legislature step up to the plate to equitably bring in revenue and prevent devastating budget cuts in 2018.

UNCHALLENGED ELECTIONS

Louisiana has struggled with unchallenged representation in the state legislature. In the 2015 elections for the State House of Representatives, nearly half of the candidates ran unopposed and were therefore automatically elected to office.²⁶ Unchallenged candidacies in several majority-minority districts have resulted in the election of non-minority representatives. While a dearth of challengers has often been attributed to voter apathy in a historically-corrupt state government, the resources needed to run for office may be an impediment in low-income communities.

21 O'Donoghue, J. "New constitutional amendments likely to hurt Louisiana higher education." The Times-Picayune, 12 Nov. 2014. Web. 7 August 2017. <http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/11/louisiana_constitutional_amend_2.html>

22 Schleisman, N. "LA Constitutions leaves programs vulnerable to budget cuts." KSLA News. 16 Feb 2016. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://www.ksla.com/story/31237613/la-constitution-leaves-programs-vulnerable-to-budget-cuts>>

23 Associated Press. "Rewrite the state Constitution? No thanks, Louisiana House decides." The Times-Picayune. 31 May 2017. Web. 13 Aug. 2017. <http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/05/rewrite_the_state_constitution.html>

24 Louisiana's 'fiscal cliff' even bigger, now \$1.5 billion. The Times-Picayune. 11 Aug. 2017. Web. 13 Aug. 2017. <http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/08/louisiana_fiscal_cliff_15_bill.html>

25 Moller, J. Guest Column: LA tax structure broken, unfair, unsustainable, inadequate and...get the picture yet? The Advocate. 10 May 2017. Web. 13 Aug. 2017. <http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_a2eaa312-3599-11e7-871d-df22f425972f.html>

26 The Associated Press. "Nearly half of Louisiana lawmakers automatically re-elected". NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 11 September. 2015. Web. 2 August 2017. <http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/09/nearly_half_of_louisiana_lawma.html>

A group of people are seated at a long table in what appears to be a community meeting or public hearing. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. In the foreground, a man with a mustache and a headset, wearing a name tag that says "Roberto", sits with his arms crossed. Next to him, a woman looks on attentively. To the left, another man with a headset and a name tag that says "Nicolas" also has his arms crossed. A young woman sits further back, looking towards the left. On the table, there are coffee cups, papers, and a small white anchor-shaped object. In the background, several framed posters or photographs are hanging on a wall. The text "WHAT POLICIES ARE INCLUDED?" is prominently displayed in the center in a bold, sans-serif font, with "POLICIES" in orange and the rest in white.

WHAT **POLICIES** ARE INCLUDED?

This guide highlights key policies introduced over the past several years that grassroots advocacy and organizing groups have determined are critical for equity and opportunity in Louisiana. Specifically, we lift up policies in the areas of Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Economic Opportunity and Work, and Civic Engagement. Some of these policies help achieve equity and opportunity in the state, and have therefore been supported by the Power Coalition and its members. Other policies have posed a threat to equity and opportunity in Louisiana, and have therefore required advocates and citizens to fight together to stop them. All policies included in the guide are outlined below.

Advocates for progressive policy face steep structural barriers in the Louisiana State Legislature. The bills

included in this guide illustrate the many challenges that these barriers create to passing powerful, equitable legislation. In the face of these barriers, progress towards equity and opportunity has been incremental, more often defined by killing a bill that would harm marginalized people in Louisiana than by passing a bill that will help them. The Power Coalition was created to start breaking down these barriers, supporting and amplifying our members' individual victories to build momentum for a progressive statewide agenda. This policy guide is a key step in that momentum-building process that both highlights the advocacy done in the 2017 legislative session and uses these victories as a foundation for future work at the Capital.

POLICY AREAS	POLICIES THAT ADVANCE EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY	POLICIES THAT IMPEDE EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY
Criminal and Juvenile Justice	HB 688: Bans the box for public colleges HB 223 and HB 27: Expands the application of domestic abuse protections HB 277: Requires anti-bias training for law enforcement	HB 302: Increases the fee for parole supervision paid by parolees to parole officers HB 279: Limits the ability of citizens to record public officials performing duties
Economic Opportunity and Work	SB 153: Provides for an increase in the state minimum wage. HB 384: Requires pay equality for employees in the state regardless of sex. New Orleans City Ordinance No. 30550: Raises the minimum wage for city-contracted work HB 177/681: Eliminates restrictions on eligibility for SNAP for people with prior drug convictions	SB 188: Creates a work requirement for Medicaid eligibility SB 162: Removes the mandate from the Inclusionary Zoning law, replacing it with an incentive-based structure HB 525: Places legal liability for all damages inflicted by a person released from a detainer request onto the law enforcement agency that released them HB 676: Restricts state grant funding to any municipality that does not comply with ICE detainer requests
Civic Engagement	HB 229 and 235: Re-enfranchise citizens on probation and parole HB 228: Redistributes district voting power to incarcerated individuals' home communities	HB 565: Restricts scope of eligible waivers to ID under current voter ID law

A group of people are gathered in a room, possibly for a meeting or protest. In the background, there are several signs and banners. One banner on the left has the word "TUAR" visible. Another banner in the center has "XXS" visible. A large banner on the right has the text "STAND WITH DIGNITY" and "WE ARE HERE" visible. A person in a dark jacket and a cap is standing on the left, facing the group. The room has a white wall and a whiteboard. The entire image is overlaid with a blue tint.

CRIMINAL **AND JUVENILE** **JUSTICE**

THE POWER COALITION'S APPROACH TO CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Power Coalition supports criminal and juvenile justice policies that advance equity and opportunity under the law, beginning with addressing that Louisiana is the most incarcerated place in the world. The Power Coalition is committed to combating the structural racism and classism that still exists today in criminal and juvenile justice policy, holdovers from centuries of state-sanctioned violence against the poor and communities of color.

This commitment to a more honest and equal idea of justice is reflected in our efforts in the state legislature. The Power Coalition is proud to have supported an initiative to mandate anti-bias training among police officers (HB277), an effort to protect young dancers in New Orleans from human trafficking without criminalizing them (SB144), and an increase to the scope of protections against domestic abuse from dating partners (HB 223). We are also proud to support the collaborative effort led by VOTE and many others to reduce the prison population by 10% over the next five years.

FACTS AND STATISTICS

Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the world. There are 816 people incarcerated for every 100,000 residents in Louisiana,²⁷ almost double the national incarceration rate of 458 prisoners per 100,000 residents.²⁸ The racial disparities of incarceration in the state reflect disparities throughout the country: 1740 out of every 100,000 Black residents are incarcerated in Louisiana state facilities, compared to only 438 of every 100,000 white residents.²⁹ In New Orleans, an appalling 99% of all children who are arrested are Black.³⁰

The state has one of the harshest habitual offender laws in the country, which allows district attorneys to file for post-conviction enhanced sentencing of anyone who has four or more federal convictions.³¹

Louisiana is also one of only two states in the country that convicts a defendant by a non-unanimous jury vote--a practice rooted in white supremacist efforts to reduce the power of black jurors.³² Most inmates in the state do not pose a physical threat to society: the 10 most common offenses with which Louisiana inmates are charged are non-violent.³³ The majority of people incarcerated in Louisiana are held in for-profit correctional facilities. The incarceration rate in the state has continued to increase over time, due in part to the fact that the state's \$182 million prison industry depends upon a steady stream of prison sentences.³⁴

Louisiana ranks 8th in the United States for the number of immigrants held in detention³⁵ and is home to one of the largest immigration detention facilities in the region, LaSalle Detention Center. The immigration court that has jurisdiction over LaSalle has one of the lowest rates of legal representation in the country.³⁶

27 Associated Press. "Louisiana Has the Highest Incarceration Rate in the Nation." The Washington Times. The Washington Times LLC, 16 Mar. 2017. Web. 27 July 2017. <<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/mar/16/louisiana-has-the-highest-incarceration-rate-in-the/>>.

28 United States of America. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics. By Bureau of Justice Statistics. US Department of Justice, 29 Dec. 2016. Web. 27 July 2017. <<https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5869>>.

29 Prison Policy Initiative. "Louisiana Profile." Prison Policy Initiative. Prison Policy Initiative, 2015. Web. 27 July 2017. <<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/LA.html>>.

30 Louisiana Center for Children's Rights. "When 99% of children arrested are Black: A case for police diversion." 20 July 2015. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://www.laccr.org/news/when-99-of-children-arrested-are-black-a-case-for-police-diversion/>>.

31 Simerman, John. "Louisiana's Habitual-offender Law Used Sparingly except in Orleans, Jefferson, St. Tammany." The New Orleans Advocate. The Advocate, 01 Oct. 2016. Web. 27 July 2017. <http://www.theadvocate.com/new-orleans/news/courts/article_cb112404-8803-11e6-a553-ef6f3cbe5dd.html>.

32 Woltering, Dennis. "La. Only One of Two States Where Unanimous Jury Not Needed for Conviction." Eyewitness News. 4wwlv. New Orleans, Louisiana, 13 Dec. 2016. Wwlv.com. Web. 27 July 2017. <<http://www.wwlv.com/news/local/la-only-one-of-two-states-where-unanimous-jury-not-needed-for-conviction/369656630>>.

33 United States of America. Louisiana Supreme Court. Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force Report and Recommendations. By Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force. Louisiana Supreme Court, 2017. Web. 27 July 2017. <https://www.lasc.org/documents/LA_Task_Force_Report_2017_FINAL.pdf>.

34 Chang, Cindy. "Louisiana Is the World's Prison Capital." NOLA.com. NOLA.com, 06 Apr. 2016. Web. 27 July 2017. <http://www.nola.com/crime/index.ssf/2012/05/louisiana_is_the_worlds_prison.html>.

35 End Isolation. "Immigration Detention Map & Statistics." End Isolation. Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement, n.d. Web. 27 July 2017. <<http://www.endisolation.org/resources/immigration-detention/>>.

36 Southern Poverty Law Center. "Shadow Prison Immigrant Detention In The South." Southern Poverty Law Center. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 July 2017. <<https://www.splcenter.org/20161121/shadow-prison-immigrant-detention-south>>.

On the campaign trail, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards promised to reduce the state's prison population. After his election he established the Justice Reinvestment Task Force to develop solutions for lowering the state's incarceration rates.³⁷ During the 2017 legislative session, Edwards introduced a package of 10 criminal reform bills sponsored by both Democrat and Republican lawmakers.³⁸

POLICIES THAT ADVANCE EQUITY IN CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE

HB 688 (formerly HB 122)

*Prohibits a public postsecondary education institution from inquiring about a prospective student's criminal history, except for history pertaining to specified offenses, prior to his acceptance for admission.*⁴⁰

Requiring college applicants to check a box that indicates their criminal history discourages those with a criminal record from applying.⁴¹ Furthermore, prospective students who answer "yes" to a criminal conviction question may have lower chances of acceptance. Applications that include these questions limit the educational achievement and, therefore, economic opportunity for those with previous criminal convictions. HB 688 is a "ban the box" bill that would prevent public colleges and universities from asking applicants about their criminal histories, with a few exceptions for stalking and sexual assault convictions.⁴² This bill was passed in the House of Representatives with a near-unanimous vote of 90-1 and signed into law by Governor John Bel Edwards on June 16th, 2017,⁴³ making Louisiana the first state to "ban the box" on public college applications.⁴⁴

HB 223 and HB 27

*Expands the application of domestic abuse battery, domestic abuse aggravated assault, and other provisions of law regarding domestic abuse to dating partners.*⁴⁵

Louisiana's protections for the victims of domestic violence stem from the Protection from Family Violence Act, which defines domestic violence as an act committed by an opposite-sex spouse living in the same household.⁴⁶

"WHILE LOUISIANA IS THE INCARCERATION CAPITAL OF THE WORLD, I REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT OUR PEOPLE ARE INHERENTLY MORE SINISTER THAN IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. FOR TOO LONG THIS HAS BEEN A DRAIN ON OUR STATE RESOURCES AND HAS DONE LITTLE TO MAKE OUR CITIES AND TOWNS MORE SECURE."
- GOV. JOHN BEL EDWARDS³⁹

37 O'Donoghue, Julia. "In John Bel Edwards' Effort to Reduce the Prison Population, How to Handle Violent Crime Is a Sticking Point." NOLA.com. NOLA.com, 09 Mar. 2017. Web. 28 July 2017. <http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/03/in_john_bel_edwards_effort_to.html>.

38 Allen, Rebekah. "Full Criminal Justice Package, to Reduce State's Prison Population, Clears House and Senate." The Advocate. N.p., 05 June 2017. Web. 31 July 2017. <http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/legislature/article_4203a3e4-4a04-11e7-a2a1-1bb38774f4c7.html>.

39 Allen, Rebekah. "Key Parts of Gov. John Bel Edwards' Prison Reform Plan: Reduce Prison Population with Bipartisan Support." The Advocate. N.p., 30 Mar. 2017. Web. 31 July 2017. <http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/article_4fee5fba-157c-11e7-8843-a37553a73486.html>.

40 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 688. Louisiana State Legislature, 18 May 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B688&sbi=y>>.

41 WWLTV. "'Ban the Box' Bill Opens Door to Higher Education for Ex-cons." 4WWLTV. CBS, 08 June 2017. Web. 31 July 2017. <<http://www.wwltv.com/news/politics/ban-the-box-bill-opens-door-to-higher-education-for-ex-cons/447145742>>.

42 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 688. Louisiana State Legislature, 18 May 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B688&sbi=y>>.

43 Kauffman, Gretel. "College after Prison? New Louisiana Law Makes It Easier." The Christian Science Monitor, The Christian Science Monitor, 5 July 2017, <www.csmonitor.com/EqualEd/2017/0705/College-after-prison-New-Louisiana-law-makes-it-easier>.

44 Triggs, Ariana. "Louisiana Becomes the First State to 'Ban the Box' on Public College Applications." CENLANOW, CENLANOW, 8 June 2017, <www.cenlanow.com/news/state-legislature/louisiana-becomes-the-first-state-to-ban-the-box-on-public-college-applications/735720301>.

45 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 223. Louisiana State Legislature, 29 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B223&sbi=y>>.

46 William Taylor Potter, Manship School News Service. "Domestic Violence Protection for Same-Sex Couples, Dating Partners Moves to Louisiana House." Gambit, Gambit, 26 Apr. 2017, 14:25, <www.bestofneworleans.com/the-latest/archives/2017/04/26/domestic-violence-protection-for-same-sex-couples-dating-partners-moves-to-louisiana-house>.

This definition does not cover individuals abused by a dating partner who does not live with them. HB 223 sought to expand the existing act to those who are not cohabitating but in an intimate partnership with their assailant, providing more equal protections for all victims of intimate partner violence. This bill was passed in the Louisiana Senate on June 12th, 2017 with a vote of 67-31. HB 27, which was also passed during the 2017 legislative session, further amended the Protection from Family Violence Act to remove the opposite-sex requirement, providing victims of domestic violence in same-sex partnerships with more equal protection under the law. Both HB 223 and HB 27 were signed into law by Governor John Bel Edwards on June 12th, 2017.^{47 48}

HB 277

Requires certain mandatory basic and annual certification hours for peace officers and establishes the time periods for all peace officers to obtain POST training and certification.⁴⁹ The 2016 killing of Alton Sterling by two white police officers in Baton Rouge raised questions about racial bias and training standards for police officers in the state.⁵⁰ This bill would require a statewide minimum of 400 hours of basic training for all police officers, including part-time and reserve officers. Required curriculum content would include training on de-escalation processes and bias-recognition, and has the potential to reduce the injuries and deaths of people of color who are confronted by police officers. This bill was passed in the House of Representatives with a vote of 82-5 and was signed into law by Governor John Bel Edwards on June 14th, 2017.⁵¹ While the bill's passage was a symbolic victory, the original version was heavily amended during the committee process to remove its strongest features, such as an examination requirement for officers.⁵² The final version of HB 277 was an important step, but does not go far enough to protect communities of color from racial bias.

POLICIES THAT IMPEDE EQUITY

HB 302

Increases the maximum amount of the monthly fee for parole supervision.⁵³ Louisiana law currently requires persons released on parole to pay a \$63 monthly supervision fee to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections. If passed, this bill would increase that supervision fee to \$100 in order to provide higher salaries for parole officers. Parole officers in Louisiana have a lower starting salary than other state employees who are similarly required to have college degrees. HB 302 was intended to source funds that could allow the state to attract and retain more parole officers through higher salaries.⁵⁴ However, the bill places even greater financial burden on formerly incarcerated individuals, who already face barriers to securing jobs, finding affordable housing, and obtaining an ID card.⁵⁵

47 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 223. Louisiana State Legislature, 29 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=HB223&sbi=y>>

48 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 27. Louisiana State Legislature, 21 Feb. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=HB27&sbi=y>>

49 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 277. Louisiana State Legislature, 30 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=HB277&sbi=y>>

50 O'Donoghue, Julia. "Alton Sterling Shooting Prompts New Policing Bills in Louisiana House." NOLA.com, NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 27 Apr. 2017, <www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/04/alton_sterling_police_training.html>

51 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 277. Louisiana State Legislature, 30 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=HB277&sbi=y>>

52 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 277. Louisiana State Legislature, 30 Mar. 2017, <<https://legiscan.com/LA/text/HB277/id/1580188>>

53 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 302. Louisiana State Legislature, 30 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=HB302&sbi=y>>

54 O'Donoghue, Julia. "Louisiana Parolees Won't Have to Fund Probation Officers' Pay Raises." NOLA.com, NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 2 June 2017, <www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/06/parole_probation_fee.html>

55 Ballard, Mark. "GOP Majority Leader Backs Raises for Parole Officers, but Not Other Louisiana State Employees." The Advocate, The Advocate, 2 May 2017, <www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/legislature/article_52e039ac-2f60-11e7-a7fb-7b6a8b929a34.html>

If unable to pay the fees, people on parole could have their licenses taken away and accrue more debt through court fees. This bill was defeated in the 2017 legislative session, leading senators to attempt to include a pay raise for parole officers in the state budget.

HB 279

Prohibits a public official or employee from: prohibiting a person from recording the activities of a public official or employee in the conduct of or while performing the duties of his public position, deleting data on a recording device, or confiscating a recording device except under certain circumstances.⁵⁷

This proposed bill provides certain scenarios in which public officials could prevent individuals from recording them while performing their duties. If passed, this bill could restrict people from recording police officers. At a time when phone and personal recordings have drawn attention to the disturbing frequency of police brutality against communities of color, this bill is unjust because it would limit the ability of citizens to protect themselves legally from police officers and to advocate for police reform. This policy failed in committee during the 2017 legislative session.⁵⁸

POWER / DECISION-MAKING TREE

This tree outlines the key players who control decision-making processes related to Criminal and Juvenile Justice policy in the state. The actions of these individuals affect the everyday lives of Louisianians. Reach out to them to make sure that your voice is heard on Criminal and Juvenile Justice issues. Contact information for each office can be found in Appendix B of this guide.

Federal Government:

- U.S. Department of Justice (enforces federal laws)
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (enforces federal immigration and border control law)

State Government

- Louisiana State Legislature (passes laws related to criminal and juvenile justice)
- Louisiana Governor (provides political backing for bills, signs bills into law)
- Louisiana State Attorney General (chief legal officer of the state)

Local Government

- City Mayor (provides direction for police chief and sets policies and procedures for police department)
- Parish Sheriff (highest law enforcer in the county)
- District Attorney (manages prosecution, investigates crime)

CASE STUDY: THE “DANCER BILL”

Sometimes fighting inequity requires activists to interrogate the stories surrounding a proposed policy and reframe the policy with a rights-based narrative. A prime example is the “dancer bill,” SB 144, introduced during the 2017 legislative session. This bill was initially written to raise the minimum age from 18 to 21 for women who dance nude in strip clubs or other alcohol-selling establishments.⁵⁹

Supporters of the bill insisted that this age limit would protect younger women who are at risk for sex trafficking, arguing that women age 18 to 20 may be exposed to pimps and illegal drugs and tricked into sex work while stripping.⁶⁰

57 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 279. Louisiana State Legislature, 30 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B279&sbi=y>>

58 Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 279. Louisiana State Legislature, 30 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B279&sbi=y>>

59 Louisiana State, Legislature. Senate Bill 144. Louisiana State Legislature, 31 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=S-B144&sbi=y>>

60 Morris, Columnist Tim. “Strip Club Operators Win, Young Women Lose: Opinion.” NOLA.com, NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 27 June 2017, <www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2017/05/strip_club_operators_win_an-oth.html>

Women's advocacy groups--including Power Coalition member Women With A Vision--questioned whether SB 144's age limit was an effective mechanism to reduce human trafficking. Rather than minimizing the risk of exploitation, the bill effectively limits young women's power to choose their profession and provide for their families. Women's advocates argued that the age limit would discriminate against women age 18 to 20--legal adults--by limiting their access to legitimate employment. Furthermore, it would criminalize young exotic dancers and contribute to Louisiana's astronomical incarceration rates. Together with political allies and partnering agencies, Women With a Vision mobilized strategic lobbying against the bill. Their efforts resulted in an amended draft of the bill that eliminated the proposed age restriction and required club owners to provide training for employees on how to identify and respond to potential indicators of human trafficking.⁶¹ These measures redirected the bill to more closely reflect its stated intent--to prevent trafficking. Ultimately, the amended bill died in committee because the original sponsor decided not to push it forward.⁶² While the anti-trafficking measures were lost in the process, Women With A Vision and other Power Coalition members celebrated the victory of successfully fighting a discriminatory bill. Community-led advocacy and the collective voice of Black women preserved labor rights and economic opportunity for women in Louisiana.

CASE STUDY: LOUISIANA SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS AND THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

According to data from 2014, elementary-school-aged children in Louisiana experience suspensions at twice the rate of the national average.⁶³ From 2001 to 2013, Black children in Louisiana were consistently between 2.5 and 4 times more likely to be suspended than White children.⁶⁴ Suspensions are dangerous for kids because they are an early step in the school-to-prison pipeline. A national study has shown that students who have been suspended multiple times are three times more likely to drop out of school before they reach the 10th

grade than students who have not been suspended at all.⁶⁵ Young people who drop out of school are likewise three times more likely to be incarcerated than those who stay in school.⁶⁶ When Louisiana schools suspend students, those kids become more likely to end up behind bars. During the 2016 legislative session, HB 372 was introduced to fight Louisiana's high suspension rates. The bill was designed to provide schools with new options for school discipline that would be more supportive of student success. HB 372's measures allowed schools to use restorative justice and other discipline measures, prohibited suspensions for uniform violations or tardiness for children in kindergarten through the 5th grade, and required each school board to develop guidelines for willful disobedience-related suspensions.⁶⁷ "Willful disobedience," a vague term that can include a child's facial expression, was responsible for more than a fifth of school suspensions in Louisiana from 2013-2014.⁶⁸

61 Louisiana State, Legislature. Senate Bill 144. Louisiana State Legislature, 31 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=S-B144&sb=y>>

62 Williams, Jessica. "Ban on Younger Strip Club Dancers to Be Decided by Courts after Lawmaker Yanks Amended Bill." *The Advocate*, The Advocate, 12 June 2017, <www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/legislature/article_ea64372a-4fad-11e7-9b3f-b148b9a2306.html>

63 Harden, K.D. "LA school suspension rates soar above national averages." *The Louisiana Weekly*. 9th May 2016. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://www.louisianaweekly.com/la-school-suspension-rates-soar-above-national-average/>>

64 Perry, A. "The New Orleans Youth Index 2016." 14 Dec 2016. Web. 7 August 2017. <http://www.datacenterresearch.org/reports_analysis/the-new-orleans-youth-index-2016/>

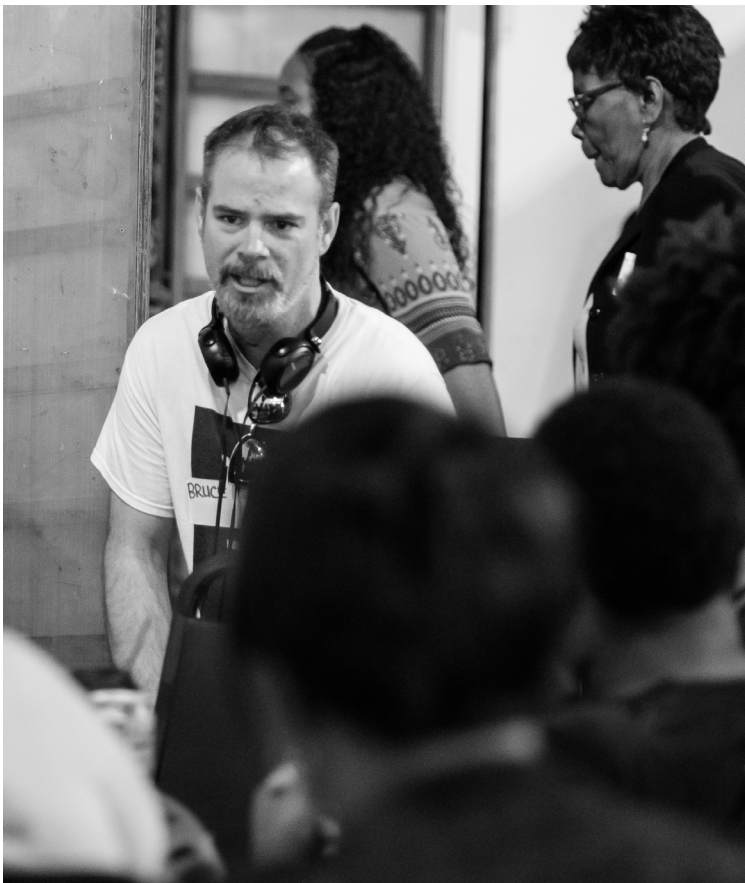
65 M.E. Goertz, et al., "Who drops out of high school and why?: Findings from a national study," *Teachers College Record*, 87, 357-73, www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=688.

66 Harlow, CW. "Education and correctional populations," Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003.

67 Advocacy Center of Louisiana. "Louisiana Legislative Session Update." 30 June 2016. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://advocacyla.org/news/147-louisiana-legislative-session-update-june-30-2016>>

68 Louisiana Department of Education, Response to Senate Concurrent Resolution 134 of the 2014 Regular Session, 2014, pg. 4 [http://www.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/9SDTDG76DCA3/\\$file/AF_6.1_SCR_134_Response.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/9SDTDG76DCA3/$file/AF_6.1_SCR_134_Response.pdf)

Power Coalition member Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC) led a campaign to support HB 372. FFLIC mobilized community members to call, email, and use social media to urge their representatives to support the bill because of its potential to keep kids in schools. However, the bill faced enormous opposition from school boards, superintendents, and teachers who refused to give up their unimpeded autonomy in decision-making.⁶⁹ Ultimately HB 372 failed in the House Education committee.⁷⁰ FFLIC and other Power Coalition members continue to expose how schools in Louisiana discriminate against children of color and feeding them into the juvenile justice system. The Power Coalition will fight for better discipline policies that let kids be kids and support their journey towards graduation.



COMMUNITY VOICE

"FOR ME TO GET HEALTH INSURANCE, THERE WAS NO BOX TO CHECK. IF ONE WANTED TO USE THAT AS AN ANALOGY, ONE COULD SAY, 'HAS THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY COLLAPSED BECAUSE I DIDN'T CHECK A BOX? DO I GET BETTER OR WORSE HEALTHCARE BECAUSE I WAS CONVICTED OR NOT?' NO. BUT IN SO MANY OTHER WAYS, WE HAVE CREATED TWO FORMS OF CITIZENSHIP."

-BRUCE REILLY, VOICE OF THE EXPERIENCED

⁶⁹ Staigers, F. "What we learned about school discipline in 2016." 3 Jan 2017. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://secondlineblog.org/2017/01/what-we-learned-about-school-discipline-in-2016/>>

⁷⁰ Advocacy Center of Louisiana. "Louisiana Legislative Session Update." 30 June 2016. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://advocacyla.org/news/147-louisiana-legislative-session-update-june-30-2016>>



ECONOMIC **OPPORTUNITY** **AND WORK**

THE POWER COALITION'S APPROACH TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND WORK

The Power Coalition works to empower people and communities that have historically been restricted from accessing the economic opportunities that should be afforded to all. This work includes recognizing that poverty, and especially nonwhite poverty, has been criminalized as a tool to demonize poor and working people instead of providing assistance and support. The Power Coalition believes in an expansion of the avenues to economic opportunity for Louisianans such as a living wage, coordinated job training and placement programs, and development that hires and supports local workers.

In the state legislature, the Power Coalition has opposed and helped defeat efforts that have threatened affordable housing mandates for new developments (SB 162). The Power Coalition has also opposed the creation of work requirements for Medicaid eligibility that would disproportionately harm disabled people receiving assistance (SB 188). The Power Coalition has supported efforts to increase the state minimum wage (SB 153), require pay equity for women (HB 384), and extend food stamps and welfare benefits to Louisianans with drug convictions (HB 681). On a local level, the Power Coalition supported the efforts of local activists and organizers that resulted in the increase in the wage for workers under contract with the City of New Orleans to \$10.55 per hour (Ordinance No. 30550), and all similar organizing efforts aimed at improving the lives of working people. On a state level, the Power Coalition strongly opposes the legislature's use of statewide preemption legislation to block measures by municipalities that raise their local minimum wage and other local progressive measures.

FACTS AND STATISTICS

Louisiana is one of the poorest states in the U.S. It is also one of the most unequal states: the income of the richest 20% of Louisianans is almost 20 times greater than

the income of the poorest 20%.⁷¹ Forty-two percent of Louisiana's families cannot afford the costs of housing, child care, food, transportation, and health care. Rates of poverty are exacerbated in majority-Black parishes in both rural and urban areas. In Orleans Parish, 52% of families struggle to afford basic necessities; in the rural parishes of St. Landry, Madison, and East Carroll, that proportion increases to 60%, 64%, and 67%, respectively.⁷² Louisiana is among the states most in need of federal aid for state revenue,⁷³ and its residents are among the most in need of federal assistance programs for basic living needs like food, housing, and healthcare.⁷⁴ High rates of poverty and dependency make the state disproportionately vulnerable to changes in the federal budget.

Agriculture, media, and tourism are among the top industries that attract economic activity and opportunity to the state. Still, Louisiana has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country at 5.5% in July 2017.⁷⁵ Women and people of color in the state face grave inequity in economic opportunity. Louisiana has the worst gender wage gap in the country: a woman makes 65 cents to every dollar a man makes. This amount drops to 51 cents for Black women and 48 cents for Latina women,

71. Bertrand, Natasha. "The 10 Poorest States In America." Business Insider, Business Insider, 17 Dec. 2014, <www.businessinsider.com/the-10-poorest-states-in-america-2014-12>.

72. Louisiana Association of United Ways, "ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Report; Louisiana; Study of Financial Hardship, United Way, 2016, <https://issuu.com/louisianaassociationofunitedway/docs/16uw_alice_report_laupdate_released?e=22574709/46792946>.

73. Scarboro, Morgan. "Which States Rely the Most on Federal Aid?" Tax Foundation, Tax Foundation, 21 Mar. 2017, <taxfoundation.org/states-rely-most-federal-aid/>.

74. Ballard, Mark. "Number of Louisiana households receiving food stamps at its highest ever - and poised to increase." The Advocate, The Advocate, 18 June 2016, <http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/legislature/article_df248098-3528-5f5d-8b80-14f07d-f6abd0.html>.

75. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Local Area Unemployment Statistics: Unemployment Rates for States, Seasonally Adjusted", United States Department of Labor, June 2017, Web. 2 August 2017. <<https://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>>

respectively.⁷⁶ In New Orleans, the unemployment rate for Black males was 52% in 2011. Although it has decreased in recent years, it remains unthinkably high at 44%.⁷⁷ Harsh criminal justice policies and high incarceration rates in Louisiana also limit economic opportunity, as formerly incarcerated applicants are disqualified from many jobs and limited to working low or minimum wages. Until recent legislation in 2017, applicants to public universities and colleges were forced to disclose whether or not they had a criminal record, further limiting educational opportunities for those with records.⁷⁸

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the state of Louisiana has relied heavily on recovery funds from several federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), for long-term reconstruction programs as well as for immediate relief from subsequent disasters. Insufficient federal recovery funding has increased the need for immigrant, day, and undocumented labor for recovery infrastructure projects throughout the state. At same time, increased federal funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has turned Louisiana into a deportation pipeline that threatens undocumented workers.

POLICIES THAT ADVANCE EQUITY

SB 153

Provides for an increase in the state minimum wage.⁷⁹ Because Louisiana does not have its own minimum wage, the default minimum wage in the state is the federally-set \$7.25. If passed, this policy would establish a state minimum wage of \$8.00/hour that would increase to \$8.50/hour in 2019. This bill would immediately increase the wages of approximately 85,000 workers in the state and would benefit an estimated 119,000 children through higher income for their parents.⁸⁰

This bill was adjourned indefinitely in the Senate Committee on Finance during the 2017 legislative session.⁸¹

HB 384

Requires pay equality for employees in the state regardless of sex.⁸² If passed, this policy would address Louisiana's abysmal wage gap by prohibiting distinctions in compensation based on sex. Specifically, the bill repeals the Louisiana Equal Pay Act and replaces it with a law that requires pay equity for both private and public employers. Exceptions would be made for seniority, merit, productivity, and other factors.⁸³ The bill also provides processes and procedures to investigate cases of wage discrimination and resolve disputes. This bill was adjourned indefinitely in the House Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations during the 2017 legislative session.⁸⁴

76. Larino, Jennifer. "How much is Louisiana's gender wage gap costing women?" NOLA.com, NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 11 April 2016, <http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2016/04/louisiana_wage_gap_costing_wom.html>

77. Williams, Jessica. "New Orleans' black male unemployment rate down to 44 percent, city officials say" The Advocate, The Advocate, 1 October 2016, <http://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/politics/article_2af961a6-8426-11e6-a816-f7af16269fdf.html>

78. WWLTV. "'Ban the Box' Bill Opens Door to Higher Education for Ex-cons." 4WWLTV. CBS, 08 June 2017. Web. 31 July 2017. <<http://www.wwltv.com/news/politics/ban-the-box-bill-opens-door-to-higher-education-for-ex-cons/447145742>>.

79. Louisiana State, Legislature. Senate Bill 153. Louisiana State Legislature, 31 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=SB153&sbi=y>>

80. Louisiana Budget Project. "Policy brief: SB 153 establishes a minimum wage for Louisiana." 23 May 2017. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://www.labudget.org/lbp/2017/05/policy-brief-sb-153-establishes-a-minimum-wage-for-louisiana/>>

81. Louisiana State, Legislature. Senate Bill 153. Louisiana State Legislature, 31 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=SB153&sbi=y>>

82. Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 384. Louisiana State Legislature, 31 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=HB384&sbi=y>>

83. NFIB, "Equal Pay Legislation Faces Uncertain Future." National Federation of Independent Business. NFIB, 16 May 2017. Web. 02 Aug. 2017. <<http://www.nfib.com/content/news/economy/equal-pay-legislation-faces-uncertain-future/>>.

84. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=HB384&sbi=y>> Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 384. Louisiana State Legislature, 31 Mar.

HB 681

Eliminates restrictions on eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and for cash assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for persons with prior drug convictions.⁸⁵ Until 2017, Louisiana citizens with drug convictions were banned from receiving SNAP benefits and TANF benefits after they returned from prison.⁸⁶ This bill proposed to end the ban on SNAP and TANF, and therefore increase the ability of people convicted of a drug offense to create financial stability and support their families. This bill was passed in the State Senate with a vote of 68-26 and was signed into law by Governor John Bel Edwards on June 15th, 2017.⁸⁷

New Orleans City Ordinance No. 30550

Requires city contractors and recipients of grants to pay employees who are involved in city contracted work a minimum of \$10.55/hour and provide a minimum of 7 paid sick days.⁸⁸ Louisiana does not have a minimum wage and the state bans municipalities from setting minimum wages for private businesses to pay their employees. This policy requires city contractors with contracts of \$25,000 or more and any company receiving city benefits or tax breaks of at least \$100,000 to pay their employees a “living wage” of \$10.55 per hour (to be adjusted with inflation).⁸⁹ This policy increases equity by providing higher wages to some of the lowest-earning employees in the city. The ordinance was passed in 2015 by the New Orleans City Council and signed into law by Mayor Mitch Landrieu.

POLICIES THAT IMPEDE EQUITY**SB 188**

Provides relative to Medicaid recipient work requirements.⁹⁰ If passed, this bill would require certain Medicaid recipients who are considered able-bodied to complete work requirements as a condition of

continuing eligibility. Qualifying recipients would be required to work at least 20 hours per week in a paid or voluntary position in order to maintain Medicaid benefits. This is a negative policy because it creates barriers for low-income people to receive health care and may discriminate against mentally or physically handicapped people who receive assistance. This bill was adjourned indefinitely in the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare during the 2017 legislative session.⁹¹

SB 162

Provides relative to the Louisiana Inclusionary Zoning and Workforce Affordable Housing Act.⁹²

In 2006, the Louisiana Legislature passed an inclusionary zoning law that allowed cities like New Orleans to require developers to include affordable housing units in major new development projects.⁹³ If passed, this bill would strip that law of its power by preventing cities from mandating affordable housing

84. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B384&sbi=y>> Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 384. Louisiana State Legislature, 31 Mar.

85. Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 265. Louisiana State Legislature, 15 June. 2017. <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?id=1051837>>

86. Payote, J. “LA governor signs historic criminal justice reform bills.” KSLA News. 15 June 2017. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://www.ksla.com/story/35676865/la-governor-signs-historic-criminal-justice-reform-bills>>

87. Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 681. Louisiana State Legislature, 15 June. 2017. <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B681&sbi=y>>

88. New Orleans City Council. “City Council May 5, 2016 Regular Meeting News Summary.” 5 May 2016. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://www.nolacitycouncil.com/news/meetingsummary.asp?id=%7BB225D770-A98D-4DCF-A602-8804330BCC43%7D>>

89. McClendon, Robert. “New Orleans council approves living wage ordinance” NOLA.com. NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 6 Aug. 2015. Web. 02 Aug. 2017. <http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/08/new_orleans_council_approves_l_1.html>

90. Louisiana State, Legislature. SB 188. Louisiana State Legislature, 3 May 2017. <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=SB188&sbi=y>>

91. Louisiana State, Legislature. SB 188. Louisiana State Legislature, 3 May 2017. <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=SB188&sbi=y>>

92. Louisiana State, Legislature. SB 162. Louisiana State Legislature, 30 May 2017. <<https://legiscan.com/LA/text/SB162/>>

93. Sayre, K. “Ban on affordable housing mandates passes Louisiana Senate.” The Times-Picayune. 11 May 2017. Web. 7 August 2017. <http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/05/affordable_housing_requirement.html>

requirements. Instead, cities would only be able to incentivize developers to create affordable housing. This is an inequitable policy because it would limit cities' ability to ensure the creation of housing options for low income individuals and families. The bill passed in the State Senate with a vote of 29-9 but was indefinitely adjourned in the House Committee on Commerce during the 2017 legislative session.⁹⁴

HB 525

Provides a cause of action against a law enforcement agency in cases where the law enforcement agency intentionally violates a Department of Homeland Security Form I-247 immigration detainer order, and the person who is released from custody in violation of the detainer order subsequently causes injury or death to another person.⁹⁵ Under this bill, if a local law enforcement agency refused to turn over a detainee to Homeland Security then the agency would be held accountable for any future crimes committed by that individual, regardless of that individual's actual immigration status. HB 525 is intended to pressure state and local law enforcement agencies to cooperate with federal immigration requests. This policy would impede equity by preventing Louisiana cities from protecting or providing "sanctuary" to undocumented immigrants. HB 525 passed in the Louisiana House but was adjourned indefinitely in the Senate during the 2017 legislative session.⁹⁶

HB 676

Restricts state grant funding to any municipality that does not comply with ICE detainer requests.⁹⁷

This bill would strip eligibility for state funding from cities with "sanctuary policies," or policies that restrict the collection of immigration status information or discourage cooperation with immigration agents. HB 676 would also allow for fines of up to \$5,000 a day for cities that maintain sanctuary policies. The bill gave Louisiana's Attorney General the power to decide if a

city's policy is a sanctuary policy. New Orleans would likely become a target of H.B. 676 if passed, because city policy prevents officers from asking about the immigration status of witnesses, suspects, or victims of a crime.⁹⁸ If passed, HB 676 would reduce immigrants' trust in law enforcement, undermine constitutional policing, transfer the liability and costs of immigration enforcement from the federal government to local law enforcement, and grant unwarranted power to the Attorney General to penalize cities.⁹⁹ Because the bill imposed civil fees, it required a supermajority, or two-thirds favorable vote in order to pass the legislature. With 64 voting in favor and 32 voting against, this bill failed in the Louisiana House because it did not receive the 70 votes that it needed to advance to the Senate.¹⁰⁰

CASE STUDY: SANCTUARY CITIES

The 2017 sanctuary cities fight in Louisiana was crucial in the context of U.S. immigration policy. In a year when the Trump administration attempted to restrict federal funding for cities that do not cooperate with U.S. immigration authorities, a slew of Southern, conservative states followed suit. Texas, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, and North Carolina all passed versions of state bills that penalized sanctuary cities.¹⁰¹ Louisiana's rejection of HB 525 and HB 676 bucked the trend of its neighbors by protecting the rights of immigrant workers

94. Louisiana State, Legislature. SB 162. Louisiana State Legislature, 30 May 2017. <<https://legiscan.com/LA/bill/SB162/2017>>

95. Louisiana State, Legislature. HB 525. Louisiana State Legislature, 01 May 2017. <<https://legiscan.com/LA/text/HB525/id/1602849>>

96. Louisiana State, Legislature. HB 525. Louisiana State Legislature, 01 May 2017. <<https://legiscan.com/LA/bill/HB525/2017>>

97. Louisiana State, Legislature. HB 676. Louisiana State Legislature, 22 May 2017. <<https://legiscan.com/LA/bill/HB676/2017>>

98. WVLA. "'Sanctuary City' Bill Fails in LA House." 10 May 2017. Web. 13 Aug. 2017. <<http://www.arklatexhomepage.com/news/local-news/sanctuary-city-bill-fails-in-la-house/710825965>>

99. NOWCRJ. "House Bill 676 is bad for public safety and bad for all our communities." 25 May 2017.

100. WVLA. "'Sanctuary City' Bill Fails in LA House." 10 May 2017. Web. 13 Aug. 2017. <<http://www.arklatexhomepage.com/news/local-news/sanctuary-city-bill-fails-in-la-house/710825965>>

101. Allen, R. "Sanctuary City ban killed by House, as New Orleans lawmakers question whether bill encourages racial profiling." The New Orleans Advocate. 9 May 2017. Web. 13 Aug. 2017. <http://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/politics/article_3e687dd8-3508-11e7-98c0-bf6b54ec7776.html>

and their families. Like most victories for workers of color, this one came from the efforts of a united front of workers standing up for their own rights. The New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice (NOWCRJ), a member of the Power Coalition, led advocacy efforts to prevent the bills from passing. NOWCRJ identified undecided senators and coordinated email and phone campaigns from constituents asking them to vote against the bills. They also provided information about the potential implications of the bills to both constituents and lawmakers.¹⁰² As part of the May 1st national Day Without Immigrants, more than one thousand workers, including members of NOWCRJ's Congress of Day Laborers and Stand with Dignity, marched in New Orleans to oppose the Louisiana anti-immigrant bills.¹⁰³ Immigrant communities stood their ground and held lawmakers accountable to keep Louisiana cities safe for workers.

POWER / DECISION-MAKING TREE

This tree outlines the key players who control decision-making processes related to Economic Opportunity and Work policies in the state. The actions of these individuals affect the everyday lives of Louisianians. Reach out to them to make sure that your voice is heard on Economic Opportunity and Work issues. Contact information for each office can be found in Appendix B of this guide.

Federal Government

Department of Labor (enforces federal laws and regulations to support U.S. workers)

State Government

- Louisiana State Legislature (passes laws related to labor and economic growth)
- Louisiana Governor (provides political backing

for bills, signs bills into law)

- Louisiana Workforce Commission (spurs economic growth and opportunity for businesses and workers throughout the state, enforces state laws and regulations on employment)

Local Government

- City Council (passes city ordinances related to labor and economic growth)
- City Offices of Workforce Development (identifies and aligns the supply of workers with the needs of growing businesses)

CASE STUDY: STAND WITH DIGNITY WARRANT CLINIC

When governments create policies that penalize members of low-income communities, poor people often end up involved in the court system. Economic opportunity is therefore closely linked to criminal and juvenile justice. The initial fee from a city traffic violation can grow exponentially for a person who cannot immediately pay the \$200. Fees for missed court dates pile on the original amount and can prompt courts to suspend the debtor's driver license. Driving without a license--what many must do in this scenario in order to keep their job--incurs even higher fees. In New Orleans, police can also issue misdemeanor warrants and arrest drivers with a suspended license. Ultimately, this system of fines, fees, and misdemeanor warrants is inequitable because it limits mobility, restricts economic opportunity, and criminalizes the poor. In March of 2017, Power

102. NOWCRJ. "House Bill 676 is bad for public safety and bad for all our communities." 25 May 2017.

103. NOWCRJ. Workers to march on May Day to unite, defy politics of hate. 30 Apr. 2017. Web. 13 Aug. 2017. <<http://nowcrj.org/2017/04/30/workers-march-may-day-unite-defy-politics-hate/>>

Coalition member Stand with Dignity sponsored a warrant clinic at Corpus Christi Epiphany Catholic Church in the 7th Ward. The clinic attracted more than 1200 people who collectively owed almost \$10,000,000 in fines. Municipal Court judges Desiree Charbonnet and Joseph Landry and Traffic Court Judge Robert Jones presided over the event, clearing warrants for misdemeanors and reducing debts in exchange for community service. One New Orleans man walked into the court with \$23,000 in debt and left with only \$9.¹⁰⁴ The success of the event has led to plans for additional clinics in the city. A longer-term solution, however, will require new policies in the City of New Orleans that limit fees for traffic violations and prevent police from issuing warrants for minor, non-violent misdemeanors.

COMMUNITY VOICE

“WHEN YOU HAVE ROUGHLY HALF OF A POPULATION THAT IS UNEMPLOYED, LOOKING AT PROGRAMS IS ONLY GOING TO PUT A BANDAID ON A GUNSHOT WOUND. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO LOOK AT WHAT STRUCTURALLY HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN THE CITY OVER DECADES. WE’LL HAVE TO ANALYZE HOW THE UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS HAVE GROWN AND WHY. THERE WAS A LOT OF OFFSHORE AND CONSTRUCTION WORK IN NEW ORLEANS THAT IS NO LONGER. ALL YOU HAVE LEFT IS THE HOSPITALITY AND THE SERVICE INDUSTRY, WHICH ACROSS THE NATION ARE TOUGH JOBS IN TERMS OF PAY.”

-ANZA BECNEL, STAND WITH DIGNITY

104. Webster, Richard. “\$23,000 in traffic fines reduced to \$9 for man as pilot program takes on New Orleans’ court system” NOLA.com. NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 29 Mar. 2017. Web. 02 Aug. 2017. <http://www.nola.com/crime/index.ssf/2017/03/23000_in_traffic_fines_reduced.html>



CIVIC **ENGAGEMENT**

THE POWER COALITION'S APPROACH TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Power Coalition believes that democracy is at its strongest when everyone has the opportunity for their voice to be heard and for their vote to be counted. The Power Coalition supports policies that aim to increase the size of the electorate and ensure that voters have the power to affect change in their communities. We recognize that the disenfranchisement of people of color has been and continues to be a tactic employed by the State to marginalize these communities and strip them of political power through explicit racial barriers, a lack of language access, and felon disenfranchisement in a criminal justice system that disproportionately affects racial minorities.

The Power Coalition has supported efforts both in the state legislature and through the court system to re-enfranchise previously incarcerated Louisianans who have completed the terms of their probation and who are now on parole (HB 229 and 235). The Power Coalition has also supported legislation to count incarcerated people as residents of their last known address for the purposes of redistricting and equal representation in the legislature (HB 228). The Power Coalition has opposed efforts to restrict exceptions to the Louisiana's voter ID laws (HB 565).

FACTS AND STATISTICS

Louisiana suffers from low voter turnout, even in elections for national congressional seats. The 2016 runoff election of John Kennedy to U.S. Senate--one of the lowest-attended recent senate elections in the state--saw a paltry turnout of 29.2%.¹⁰⁵ While low-turnout is expected for runoff elections, each governor election since 1983 in Louisiana has also seen successively fewer voters.¹⁰⁶ Low voter turnout is partially affected by the systematic disenfranchisement of formerly incarcerated people within the state. Any citizen on probation or parole within the state is prevented from voting--a policy

that disproportionately affects the voting rights of low-income communities of color.

Gerrymandering--the way that lawmakers manipulate the boundaries of state election districts to disproportionately benefit one voting group at the expense of another--has also suppressed the political voice of communities of color in Louisiana. After the U.S. Census each decade, states have the opportunity to redraw the districts from which officials are elected.¹⁰⁷ In 2011, a Republican-majority State House had the opportunity to control the redistricting for the first time since Reconstruction.¹⁰⁸ Wielding that authority, they drew new lines that concentrate Black and Democrat voting power in a single Congressional district that stretches from New Orleans to Baton Rouge. This diluted the voice of Black voters within the neighboring five districts,¹⁰⁹ ensuring that Republicans have carried five Congressional districts in Louisiana while Democrats have carried only one in every national election since 2012. Fairer, nonpartisan districting would result in at least two Democratic districts and a second majority-minority district within the state.¹¹⁰ Across all levels of government in Louisiana, there are 2882 elected Democrat and 2090 elected Republicans in office.¹¹¹

105. Rainey, Richard. "Louisiana Senate runoff had lowest voter turnout in recent years", NOLA.com. NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 12 Dec. 2016. Web. 02 Aug. 2017. <http://www.nola.com/elections/index.ssf/2016/12/louisiana_senate_runoff_had_lo.html>

106. O'Donoghue, Julia. "Louisiana voter turnout was lower than expected - Why?" NOLA.com. NOLA.com, The Times Picayune, 26 Oct. 2015. Web. 02 Aug. 2017. <http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/10/louisiana_low_voter_turnout.html>

107. Louisiana House of Representatives. 2001 Redistricting Information: Frequently Asked Questions. Web 7 August 2017. <<http://house.louisiana.gov/hredist/redist-faq.htm>>

108. Wolf, Stephen. "Here's What Louisiana Might Have Looked like in 2016 without Congressional Gerrymandering." Daily Kos, Kos Media, LLC, 27 Dec. 2016, <www.dailykos.com/stories/2016/12/27/1613370/-Here-s-what-Louisiana-might-have-looked-like-in-2016-without-congressional-gerrymandering>

109. Bazelon, Emily. "How the Supreme Court Could Make the Voting Rights Act Better Instead of Striking It Down." Slate.com, Slate Magazine, 11 Feb. 2013, <www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/jurisprudence/2013/02/the_voting_rights_act_and_shelby_county_v_holder_how_the_supreme_court_could.html>

110. Wolf, S. "Here's What Louisiana Might Have Looked like in 2016 without Congressional Gerrymandering." Daily Kos, Kos Media, LLC, 27 Dec. 2016, <www.dailykos.com/stories/2016/12/27/1613370/-Here-s-what-Louisiana-might-have-looked-like-in-2016-without-congressional-gerrymandering>

111. Louisiana Secretary of State. "Elected Officials." Web. 7 August 2017. <<https://voterportal.sos.la.gov/ElectedOfficials>>

In the 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* case, the Supreme Court struck down measures in the Voting Rights Act that required certain states with a history of discrimination to obtain federal approval before making any changes to their election law.¹¹² The *Shelby* decision has made it more difficult to overturn discriminatory election practices in Louisiana, which was one of the states required to seek approval from the federal government.¹¹³

POLICIES THAT ADVANCE EQUITY

HB 229

Allows a person who is under an order of imprisonment for conviction of a felony to register and vote if the person has not been confined in a correctional facility pursuant to the order within the last five years.¹¹⁴ Anyone in Louisiana who is “under an order of imprisonment” is prevented from voting by the state constitution. Current laws have determined that the term “under an order of imprisonment” includes anyone under community supervision, meaning on probation or parole. If passed, this policy would have granted voting rights to formerly-convicted persons on parole or probation in Louisiana, providing 70,000 Louisianans the opportunity to participate in elections.¹¹⁵ This policy failed during the 2017 legislative session, but garnered significant attention due to the advocacy of Power Coalition members such as Voice of the Experienced (VOTE), who concurrently sued the Secretary of State over the law.

HB 235

Limits the authority of the legislature to suspend a person’s right to register and vote to when the person is incarcerated for conviction of a felony.¹¹⁶ If passed, this policy would have increased equity in the state by affirming the right of citizens to vote while on probation or parole. Like HB 229, HB 235 sought to effectively re-enfranchise 70,000 formerly incarcerated

Louisianans as soon as they are released from detention facilities. The policy failed in the Committee on House and Governmental Affairs during the 2017 legislative session.

HB 228

Provides, for purposes of all redistricting by the legislature, that an incarcerated person shall be counted at his last known residential address prior to incarceration if within the state, and if the last known residential address is outside of the state, unknown, or unreported, the incarcerated person shall be subtracted from the census count.¹¹⁷ When the Louisiana legislature conducts the redistricting process for the state, people who are incarcerated are counted as living in the districts where they are imprisoned. Because Louisianans who are convicted of a felony cannot vote, and those who are awaiting trial must vote by absentee ballot, disproportionate power is given to people living in the rural districts that house those facilities. HB 228 proposed to count incarcerated individuals in the redistricting process according to their last address before their incarceration. If passed, this policy would have redistributed power back to incarcerated individuals’ home communities so that those who suffer from high incarceration rates of their friends, family, and neighbors would have a proportional voice in elections and representation in the legislature. The policy failed during the 2017 legislative session.

112. Fuller, J. “How has voting changed since *Shelby County v. Holder*?” 7 July 2014. Web. 7 August 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/07/07/how-has-voting-changed-since-shelby-county-v-holder/?utm_term=.89e1bfa741e9>

113. Roth, Z. “In Louisiana Parish, a fight for Black voting rights.” 14 August 2015. Web. 7 August 2017. <<http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/louisiana-parish-fight-black-voting-rights>>

114. Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 229. Louisiana State Legislature, 29 Mar. 2017, <<https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1028666>>

115. “Senate Votes to End Juvenile Life Sentences – Louisiana Budget Project.” Louisiana Budget Project, Louisiana Budget Project, 27 Apr. 2017, Web. 2 August 2017. <www.labudget.org/lbp/2017/04/senate-votes-to-end-juvenile-life-sentences/>

116. Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 235. Louisiana State Legislature, 29 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B235&sbi=y>>

117. Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 228. Louisiana State Legislature, 29 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B228&sbi=y>>

POLICIES THAT IMPEDE EQUITY

HB 565

*Repeals provisions of law that allow a person to vote without presenting certain forms of identification if the person executes an affidavit containing certain information.*¹¹⁸ If passed, this policy would have made it more difficult for citizens to vote by taking away their right to sign an affidavit instead of presenting a photo ID. If passed, this bill would deprive citizens of their right to vote and contribute to low voter turnout—an issue that regularly plagues Louisiana. This law would also disproportionately affect low-income communities, people with disabilities, and the elderly, who may lack the financial or transportation resources to access a photo ID. Laws like this are racially discriminatory—nationally, 25% of Black citizens of voting age do not have a government-issued ID, compared to only 8% of white citizens.¹¹⁹ The policy failed in the Committee on House and Governmental Affairs during the 2017 legislative session, a major win for the Power Coalition’s effort to protect the voting rights of all Louisianans.

POWER / DECISION-MAKING TREE

This tree outlines the key players who control decision-making processes related to Civic Engagement in the state. The actions of these individuals affect the everyday lives of Louisianians. Reach out to them to make sure that your voice is heard on Civic Engagement issues. Contact information for each office can be found in Appendix B of this guide.

Federal Government:

- U.S. Department of Justice (can intervene in any acts of the state that are unconstitutional)
- U.S. Supreme Court (judges whether state policies are in keeping with the U.S. Constitution)

State Government

- Louisiana State Legislature (controls redistricting process, passes laws about voting rights)
- Louisiana Governor (provides political backing for bills, signs bills into law)
- Louisiana Secretary of State (administers state elections and voting)
- Louisiana Supreme Court (judges whether state policies are in keeping with the Louisiana Constitution)
- Local Government
- Parish Registrar of Voters (administers local elections and voting)

CASE STUDY: VOTE VS. LOUISIANA

Creating equity and opportunity for ordinary citizens often requires a multi-pronged approach, and the court system can be a conduit for change when the legislative process fails. While HB 229 was being introduced in the Louisiana State House of Representatives, Voice of the Experienced (VOTE), a member of the Power Coalition, simultaneously challenged the state law that prevents Louisiana citizens on probation or parole from voting. In the VOTE vs. Louisiana court case, VOTE argued that the language in the Louisiana Constitution that states that persons “under the order of imprisonment” cannot vote does not prohibit people on parole or probation from voting because they are not actually imprisoned. While Judge Timothy Kelly ruled in favor

118. Louisiana State, Legislature. House Bill 565. Louisiana State Legislature, 31 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=17rs&b=H-B565&sbi=y>>

119. “Oppose Voter ID Legislation - Fact Sheet.” American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU, <www.aclu.org/other/oppose-voter-id-legislation-fact-sheet>.

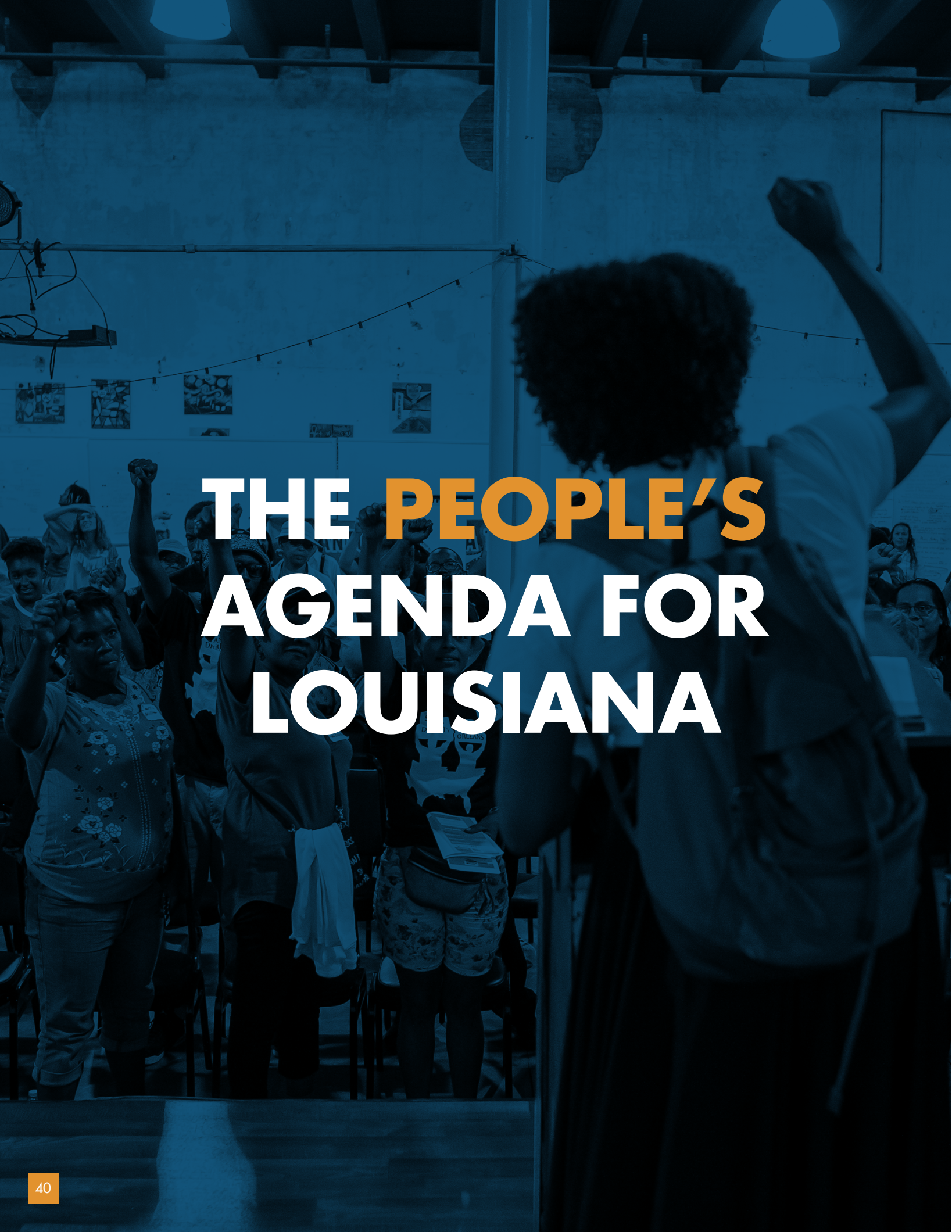
120. “VOTE v. Louisiana.” Voice of the Experienced, Voice of the Experienced, <www.vote-nola.org/vote-v-louisiana.html>.

of the Secretary of State that the law reflected the intent of the framers of the Constitution, he publicly declared that he personally disagreed with his own ruling, saying, "I don't like this ruling. It's unfair." VOTE appealed his decision to the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals, where it awaits review.¹²⁰ While individual policy and court losses are disappointing, they serve as rallying points to build a community-driven movement for change. VOTE mobilized people from all over the state who are directly impacted by the law to fill the courtroom on the day of the ruling. Even though VOTE lost the case, it will continue to use the power built by the voices of formerly incarcerated Louisianans through their participation in the case.

COMMUNITY VOICE

"PROBATION SHOULD NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE...THAT MEANS, LIKE I SAID, IF YOU HAD COMMITTED A CRIME FIVE YEARS AGO, AND IF YOU DID YOUR TIME FIVE YEARS AGO, EVEN IF YOU DID A FRACTION OF THAT TIME AND YOU COME OUT WITH PROBATION THAT SHOWS ONE THING: YOU ARE READY AND YOU ARE FIT FOR SOCIETY. SO, WITHIN THAT, I THINK THAT THERE SHOULD BE A LAW THAT'S BANNING THAT, WHEN IT COMES TO PEOPLE GETTING OUT OF PRISON AND THEY'RE ON PROBATION OR SOME TYPE OF PAROLE, THEY SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE, BECAUSE THEY HAVE PROVEN THEMSELVES THAT THEY ARE FIT FOR SOCIETY."

**- CALVIN 'COSMO' RUSSELL,
NEW ORLEANS**

A photograph of a diverse group of people at what appears to be a community meeting or protest. Many individuals have their right fists raised in the air, a gesture of solidarity. The scene is set indoors with a white wall in the background adorned with string art and small posters. A person with curly hair is seen from behind in the foreground, looking towards the crowd. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

THE PEOPLE'S AGENDA FOR LOUISIANA

POWERING FORWARD

The Power Coalition hopes that this policy guide has provided insight into the challenges facing organizers and advocates working in a state with an enduring legacy of marginalization, racial inequity, and structural barriers to economic opportunity. The policies that we have outlined highlight the progress that our advocacy has achieved in this complex policy environment. We hope that this guide can catalyze a wider range of communities to organize and collectively demand equity and opportunity for themselves.

THE PEOPLE'S AGENDA FOR LOUISIANA

CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE

Public Safety Comes from Investment in Communities

Jobs, mental health care, substance abuse care, and affordable housing must be recognized as powerful tools for public safety. Louisiana must stop criminalizing poor communities.

Restorative Justice for the Incarceration Capital of the World

Louisiana must confront the discriminatory and predatory structure of the criminal and juvenile justice system to reverse the horrific effects that the school-to-prison pipeline, heavy sentencing, and habitual offender policies have wrought on families and communities across our state.

Equal Protections for All Residents

Louisiana's long and enduring legacy of state-sponsored violence against communities of color must be brought to an end. In its place, Louisiana must enact and enforce policies that protect all residents of our state--regardless of their race, religion, immigration status, or self-

identity--from discrimination and harassment by any government, business, or individual.

End the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Over the past generation, police officers have become a regular part of school staff, and school discipline has bled into the court system. This has disproportionately affected African-American children. Louisiana must reimagine its school discipline policies and dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND WORK

Statewide Preemption Hurts Our Cities and State

Currently, statewide preemption prevents cities from regulating their own wages and job benefits to address local economic issues. The Louisiana legislature must abolish preemption policies and respect local voters' demands for local solutions.

Living Wage for All of Louisiana

Working families across Louisiana cannot afford the costs of housing, child care, food, transportation, and health care – basic necessities. The legislature must implement a statewide living wage to give working people the opportunity to rise out of poverty.

Louisiana's Poor Residents Should be Helped not Criminalized

Louisiana must not use the criminal justice system to criminalize and extract wealth from poor residents to finance cities. All governments must identify alternative sources for their budgeting processes and provide poor populations with support and avenues for economic mobility.

Affordable Housing is a Human Right, Not a Handout

Affordable housing is essential for safety, but many of our community members, even those working full time, are excluded from the housing market because of financial hardship or criminal records discrimination. The legislature must enact and enforce multiple strategies to address housing issues as Louisiana moves further into an affordable housing crisis.

Tax Reform before the Fiscal Cliff

Louisiana will face a \$1.5 billion fiscal cliff in 2018. This crisis must be a rallying cry for tax reform, not an excuse to constantly cut funding for our education and healthcare systems. Louisiana must rebuild the state's tax structure to prioritize revenue-raising strategies for budget reconciliation.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Voting Rights: One Vote, One Voice

Voting is one of America's most basic and fundamental rights. If we are to truly reconnect returning citizens to our communities then we must fully restore their basic human rights. This starts with the right to vote. Louisiana must re-enfranchise the tens of thousands of citizens that have been denied the right to vote after the completion of their term of imprisonment.

Nonpartisan Redistricting is a Requirement for Equal Justice

All residents deserve equal power of vote in the ballot box and voice in the legislature. Louisiana must implement nonpartisan redistricting policies to ensure that our government reflects and represents our state.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: VOTING RECORDS

The votes cast by each member of the Louisiana House of Representatives on each of the bills covered in this guide are included below. Visit the Louisiana State Legislature website to find out who your state representative is.

Representative	Phone Number	Party	HB 223	HB 277	HB 525	HB 676	HB 681	HB 688
Abramson, Neil C.	(504)275-8051	Dem	Yea	Absent	Absent	Absent	Yea	Yea
Anders, John F. "Andy"	(318)336-5865	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Absent	Yea	Yea
Armes, James K.	(337)238-7004	Dem	Absent	Yea	Nay	Nay	Absent	Yea
Bagneris, John H.	(504)243-7783	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Billiot, Robert E.	(504)436-8929	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Bouie, Joseph	(504)286-1033	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Brown, Chad	(225)687-2410	Dem	Nay	Yea	Yea	Absent	Absent	Yea
Carpenter, Barbara	(225)771-5674	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Carter, Gary	(504)361-6600	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Absent
Carter, Robby	(985)748-2245	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	Yea
Cox, Kenny R.	(855)844-8583	Dem	Absent	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Danahay, Michael E.	(337)527-5581	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Franklin, A B	(337)491-2320	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Gaines, Randal L.	(985)652-1228	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Gisclair, Jerry	(985)798-7707	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Glover, Cedric	(318)221-7775	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Hall, Jeffrey "Jeff"	(318)487-5661	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Harris, Jimmy	(504)243-1960	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Hill, Dorothy Sue	(800)259-2118	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Hunter, Marcus L.	(318)362-3440	Dem	Nay	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Jackson, Katrina R.	(318)343-2877	Dem	Nay	Yea	Nay	Absent	Yea	Yea
James, Edward C. "Ted"	(225)343-3633	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Jefferson, Patrick O.	(318)927-2519	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Jenkins, Sam	(318)632-5970	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Johnson, Robert A.	(318)253-8891	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Absent
Jones, Sam	(337)828-7778	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Absent	Yea	Yea
Jordan, Edmond	(225)359-9480	Dem	Nay	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Landry, Terry	(337)373-9380	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
LeBas, H. Bernard	(337)363-0152	Dem	Absent	Yea	Nay	Nay	Absent	Yea
Leger, Walt III	(504)556-9970	Dem	Yea	Absent	Nay	Absent	Yea	Yea
Lyons, Rodney	(504)510-5417	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Marcelle, Denise	(225)359-9362	Dem	Yea	Absent	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Miller, Dustin	(337)943-2900	Dem	Absent	Yea	Absent	Nay	Yea	Yea
Moreno, Helena	(504)568-2740	Dem	Yea	Absent	Absent	Nay	Yea	Yea
Norton, Barbara M.	(318)632-5887	Dem	Absent	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Pierre, Vincent J.	(337)262-2330	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Price, Edward J.		Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea

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Reynolds, Eugene	(318)371-3092	Dem	Absent	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Smith, Patricia Haynes	(225)342-7106	Dem	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Thibaut, Major	(225)638-3811	Dem	Absent	Yea	Yea	Absent	Yea	Yea
White, Malinda	(985)730-2147	Dem	Yea	Absent	Nay	Absent	Yea	Absent
Brown, Terry R.	(855)261-6566	Ind	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Marino, Joseph	(504)361-6013	Ind	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea
Richard, Jerome	(985)447-0999	Ind	Yea	Yea	Nay	Absent	Yea	Yea
Abraham, Mark	(337)475-3016	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Amedée, Beryl	(985)858-2967	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Bacala, Tony	(225)677-8020	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Bagley, Larry	(318)925-9588	Rep	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Barras, Taylor F.	(337)373-4051	Rep	Yea	Yea		Yea	Yea	Yea
Berthelot, John A.	(225)647-5646	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Bishop, Stuart J.	(337)981-7409	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Broadwater, Chris	(985)543-4900	Rep	Nay	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Carmody, Thomas	(318)862-9956	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Carter, Stephen F.	(225)362-5305	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Chaney, Charles R.	(318)728-5875	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Connick, Patrick	(504)371-0240	Rep	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	Absent	Yea
Coussan, Jean-Paul	(337)262-2400	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Crews, Raymond J.	(318)716-7532	Rep	Nay	Nay		Yea	Nay	Yea
Cromer, Gregory	(985)645-3592	Rep	Yea	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Davis, Paula	(225)362-5301	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Absent
DeVillier, Phillip	(337)457-0194	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Dwight, Stephen	(337)491-2315	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Edmonds, Rick	(225)295-9240	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Emerson, Julie	(337)886-4687	Rep	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Falconer, Reid	(985)792-5185	Rep	Yea	Absent	Absent	Yea	Absent	Yea
Foil, Franklin J.	(225)342-6777	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Garofalo, Raymond E.	(504)277-4729	Rep	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea	Absent	Absent
Guinn, John E.	(337)824-0376	Rep	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Harris, Lance	(318)767-6095	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Havard, Kenneth E.	(225)634-7470	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Hazel, Lowell C. "Chris"	(318)767-6082	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Henry, Cameron	(504)838-5433	Rep	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Absent
Hensgens, Bob	(337)893-5035	Rep	Nay	Absent	Yea	Absent	Nay	Yea
Hilferty, Stephanie	(504)885-4154	Rep	Yea	Absent	Absent	Yea	Absent	Yea
Hodges, Valarie	(225)791-2199	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Hoffmann, Frank A.	(318)362-4130	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Hollis, Paul	(985)871-4680	Rep	Nay	Absent	Yea	Yea	Absent	Yea
Horton, Dodie	(318)949-2463	Rep	Absent	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Howard, Frank A.	(318)256-4135	Rep	Yea	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Huval, Mike	(337)332-3331	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Ivey, Barry	(225)261-5739	Rep	Yea	Absent	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Landry, Nancy	(337)262-2252	Rep	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	Absent	Absent
Leopold, Christopher J.	(504)393-5649	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Absent
Mack, Sherman Q.	(225)567-3677	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Magee, Tanner	(985)858-2970	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
McFarland, Jack	(318)259-4275	Rep	Absent	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Absent
Miguez, Blake	(337)937-8827	Rep	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea

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Miller, Gregory A.	(985)764-9991	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Morris, James "Jim"	(318)995-6852	Rep	Nay	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Absent
Morris, John C. "Jay"	(318)362-4270	Rep	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea	Nay	Nay
Pearson, J. Kevin	(985)646-6487	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Pope, J. Rogers	(225)667-3588	Rep	Nay	Absent	Absent	Yea	Absent	Absent
Pugh, Stephen E.	(985)386-7844	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Absent
Pylant, Steve E.	(318)435-7313	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Schexnayder, Clay	(225)473-6016	Rep	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea
Schroder, John M.		Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Seabaugh, Alan	(318)676-7990	Rep	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Shadoin, Robert E.	(318)251-5038	Rep	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Simon, Scott M.	(985)893-6246	Rep	Absent	Absent	Yea	Yea	Absent	Absent
Stagni, Joseph A.	(504)465-3479	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Stefanski, John M.	(337)384-8999	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea
Stokes, Julie	(504)468-8603	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Talbot, Kirk	(504)736-7299	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Absent
Thomas, Polly	(504)837-6559	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Zeringue, Jerome	(985)876-8823	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea

The votes cast by each member of the Louisiana Senate on each of the bills covered in this guide are included below. Visit the Louisiana State Legislature website to find out who your state senator is.

Senator	Phone Number	Party	HB 223	HB 277	HB 681	HB 688	SB 162
Barrow, Regina	"(225)359-9400						
(225) 359-9332"	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	
Bishop, Wesley	(504)242-4198	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Boudreaux, Gerald	"(337)267-7520						
(844)885-6578"	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	
Carter, Troy	(504)302-3682	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Colomb, Yvonne	(225)342-9700	Dem	Yea	Absent	Yea	Absent	Yea
LaFleur, Eric	"(337)363-5019						
(877)396-4600"	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	
Luneau, Jay	(318)484-2288	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Milkovich, John	(318)676-7877	Dem	Nay	Yea	Nay	Nay	Nay
Morrell, JP	(504)284-4794	Dem	Yea	Absent	Yea	Absent	Yea
Peterson, Karen Carter	(504)568-8346	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Smith, Gary	(985)764-9122	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Tarver, Gregory	(318)227-1499	Dem	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Thompson, Francis	"(318)878-9408						
(800)259-9408"	Dem	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	
Alario, John	(504)340-2221	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Allain, R.L. "Bret"	"(337)828-9107						
(985)850-2738"	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	
Appel, Conrad	(504)838-5550	Rep	Yea	Absent	Nay	Absent	Nay
Chabert, Nobert "Norby"	(985)858-2927	Rep	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay
Claitor, Dan	(225)925-7630	Rep	Yea	Yea	Absent	Yea	Absent
Cortez, Page	(337)993-7430	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea

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Donahue, Jack	(985)727-7949	Rep	Yea	Yea	Absent	Yea	Absent
Erdey, Dale	"(225)686-2881						
(800)334-8557"	Rep	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	
Fannin, James R. "Jim"	"(318)259-6620						
(800)259-8694"	Rep	Nay	Yea	Nay	Nay	Nay	
Gatti, Ryan	"(318)746-0861						
(844)824-6937"	Rep	Nay	Nay	Nay	Yea	Nay	
Hewitt, Sharon	"(985)646-6490						
(504)278-6530"	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	
Johns, Ronnie	(337)491-2016	Rep	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay
Lambert, Eddie	(225)673-5048	Rep	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay
Long, Gerald	"(318)628-5799						
(800)265-2437"	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	
Martiny, Daniel "Danny"	(504)834-7676	Rep	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Mills, Jr, Fred H.	"(337)845-4240						
(337)365-8484"	Rep	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	
Mizell, Beth	(985)839-3936	Rep	Nay	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea
Morrish, Dan "Blade"	"(337)824-3979						
(888)824-3979"	Rep	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	
Peacock, Barrow	(318)741-7180	Rep	Yea	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay
Perry, Jonathan "J.P."	(337)643-6425	Rep	Nay	Nay	Nay	Yea	Nay
Riser, Neil	"(318)649-0977						
(866)513-8699"	Rep	Nay	Yea	Nay	Yea	Nay	
Smith, John	"(337)238-2709						
(800)259-2709"	Rep	Nay	Absent	Yea	Yea	Yea	
Walsworth, Mike	"(318)340-6453						
(866)518-8573"	Rep	Nay	Yea	Nay	Absent	Nay	
Ward, III, Rick	(225)246-8838	Rep	Nay	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
White, Mack "Bodi"	(225)272-1324	Rep	Nay	Absent	Nay	Yea	Nay

APPENDIX B: CONTACT INFORMATION
FOR KEY DECISION MAKERS

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- U.S. Department of Justice: (202) 353-1555
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement: (866) 347-2423
- U.S. Supreme Court: (202) 479-3000
- Department of Labor: 1-866-487-2365

STATE GOVERNMENT

Louisiana State Legislature House Switchboard: (225) 342-6945

Louisiana State Legislature Senate Switchboard (225) 342-2040

Louisiana Office of the Governor: (225) 342-0991 or (844) 860-1413

Louisiana Department of Justice/ Attorney General’s Office: (225) 326-6079 or (225) 326-6757

Louisiana Secretary of State’s Office: (225) 922-2880

Louisiana Supreme Court: (504) 310-2300

Louisiana Workforce Commission: (225) 342-3111

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

City of New Orleans Mayor: (504) 658-4000

City Council of New Orleans: (504) 658-1000

City of New Orleans Office of Workforce Development: (504) 658-4500

City of Baton Rouge Mayor-President: (225) 389-3100

Metropolitan Council of Baton Rouge: (225) 389-3123

City of Baton Rouge Office of Workforce Development: (225) 389-4640

City of Shreveport Mayor: (318) 673-5050

City Council of Shreveport: (318) 673-5262

PARISH SHERIFFS

A

Acadia: 337-250-9043

Allen: 337-738-3010

Ascension: 225-644-5654

Assumption: 985-369-7281

Avoyelles: 318-253-4000

B

Beauregard: 337-462-0141

Bienville: 318-263-7938

Bossier: 318-965-3409

Caddo: 318-681-0611

Calcasieu: 337-491-3720

Caldwell: 318-649-5210

Cameron: 337-274-1837

Catahoula: 318-403-2998

Claiborne: 318-927-9339

Concordia: 318-757-2772

Desoto: 318-872-3956

East Baton Rouge: 225-389-5055

East Carroll: 318-559-2800

East Feliciana: 225-683-6825

Evangeline: 337-336-0292

Franklin: 318-435-4505

Grant: 318-627-2035

Iberia: 337-369-3714

Iberville: 225-659-7799

Jackson: 318-259-9021

Jefferson: 504-363-5701

Jefferson Davis: 337-774-5539

Lafayette: 337-232-9211

Lafourche: 985-449-4420

Lasalle: 318-992-2151

Lincoln: 318-251-5111

Livingston: 225-665-4296

Madison: 318-574-3584

Morehouse: 318-281-4141

Natchitoches: 318-357-7802

Orleans: 504-288-2494

Ouachita: 318-396-0576

Plaquemines: 504-669-0877

Pointe Coupee: 225-718-1401

Rapides: 318-473-6706

Red River: 318-932-3813

Richland: 318-248-2896

Sabine: 318-567-3184

St. Bernard: 504-373-6604

St. Charles: 985-783-2883

St. Helena: 225-777-4796

St. James: 225-869-4331

St. John The Baptist: 985-651-1747

St. Landry: 337-585-6424

St. Martin: 337-394-3071

St. Mary: 337-828-1960

St. Tammany: 985-705-4200

Tangipahoa: 985-517-0909

Tensas: 318-766-4500

Terrebonne: 985-872-5707

Union: 318-608-8077

Vermilion: 337-898-4409

Vernon: 337-238-4979

Washington: 985-839-3434

Webster: 318-846-2810

West Baton Rouge: 225-921-2982

West Carroll: 318-428-2331

West Feliciana: 225-938-6333

Winn: 318-628-7700

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

1st Judicial District - Caddo: 318-226-6826

2nd Judicial District - Bienville, Claiborne, Jackson: 318-927-3664

3rd Judicial District - Lincoln, Union: 318-680-6904

4th Judicial District - Morehouse, Ouachita: 318-388-4720

5th Judicial District - Franklin, Richland, West Carroll: 318-428-3219

6th Judicial District - East Carroll, Madison, Tensas: 318-766-4892

7th Judicial District - Catahoula, Concordia: 318-336-5526

8th Judicial District - Winn: 318-648-0461

9th Judicial District - Rapides: 318-473-6650

10th Judicial District - Natchitoches: 318-471-3381

11th Judicial District - Sabine: 318-256-6246

12th Judicial District - Avoyelles: 318-253-6587

14th Judicial District - Calcasieu: 337-477-3599

15th Judicial District - Acadia, Lafayette, Vermilion:
337-981-5008

16th Judicial District - Iberia, St. Martin, St. Mary: 337-369-4420

17th Judicial District - Lafourche: 985-447-2003

18th Judicial District - Iberville, Pointe Coupee, West
Baton Rouge: 225-625-3770

19th Judicial District - East Baton Rouge: 225-389-3400

20th Judicial District - East Feliciana, West Feliciana:
225-634-2535

21st Judicial District - Livingston, St. Helena,
Tangipahoa: 985-748-7890

22nd Judicial District - St. Tammany, Washington: 985-809-8383

23rd Judicial District - Ascension, Assumption, St. James:
225-473-6777

24th Judicial District - Jefferson: 504-361-2500

25th Judicial District - Plaquemines: 504-297-5146

26th Judicial District - Bossier, Webster: 318-965-3716

27th Judicial District - St. Landry: 337-948-8316

28th Judicial District - Lasalle: 318-992-8282

29th Judicial District - St. Charles: 985-783-6263

30th Judicial District - Vernon: 337-239-2008

31st Judicial District - Jefferson Davis: 337-824-1893

32nd Judicial District - Terrebonne: 985-868-0704

33rd Judicial District - Allen: 337-639-2641

34th Judicial District - St. Bernard: 504-271-1811

35th Judicial District - Grant: 318-627-3205

36th Judicial District - Beauregard: 337-463-5578

37th Judicial District - Caldwell: 318-649-7410

38th Judicial District - Cameron: 337-775-5714

39th Judicial District - Red River: 318-932-9323

40th Judicial District - St. John the Baptist: 985-652-9757

42nd Judicial District - De Soto: 318-872-1641

Criminal District Court - Orleans: 504-822-2414

PARISH REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

Acadia: 337-788-8841

Allen: 337-639-4966

Ascension: 225-621-5780;225-473-7906

Assumption: 985-369-7347

Avoyelles: 318-253-7129

Beauregard: 337-463-7955

Bienville: 318-263-7407	Livingston: 225-686-3054
Bossier: 318-965-2301	Madison: 318-574-2193
Caddo: 318-226-6891	Morehouse: 318-281-1434
Calcasieu: 337-721-4000	Natchitoches: 318-357-2211
Caldwell: 318-649-7364	Orleans: 504-658-8300; 504-658-8323
Cameron: 337-775-5493	Ouachita: 318-327-1436
Catahoula: 318-744-5745	Plaquemines: 504-934-3620
Claiborne: 318-927-3332	Pointe Coupee: 225-638-5537
Concordia: 318-336-7770	Rapides: 318-473-6770
Desoto: 318-872-1149	Red River: 318-932-5027
East Baton Rouge: 225-389-3940; 225-389-5206; 225-389-7682	Richland: 318-728-3582
East Carroll: 318-559-2015	Sabine: 318-256-3697
East Feliciana: 225-683-3105	St. Bernard: 504-278-4232
Evangeline: 337-363-5538; 337-468-5750; 337-432-6692	St. Charles: 985-783-5120
Franklin: 318-435-4489	St. Helena: 225-222-4440
Grant: 318-627-9938	St. James: 225-562-2445
Iberia: 337-369-4407	St. John The Baptist: 985-652-9797; 985-331-4559
Iberville: 225-687-5201	St. Landry: 337-948-0572
Jackson: 318-259-2486	St. Martin: 337-394-2204
Jefferson: 504-736-6191; 504-349-5690; 504-467-5168	St. Mary: 337-828-4100; 985-384-8638
Jefferson Davis: 337-824-0834	St. Tammany: 985-809-5500; 985-646-4125
Lafayette: 337-291-7140	Tangipahoa: 985-748-3215; 985-345-3717
Lafourche: 985-447-3256; 985-632-5520	Tensas: 318-766-3931
Lasalle: 318-992-2254	Terrebonne: 985-873-6533
Lincoln: 318-251-5110	Union: 318-368-8660
	Vermilion: 337-898-4324
	Vernon: 337-239-3690

Washington: 985-839-7850

Webster: 318-377-9272

West Baton Rouge: 225-336-2421

West Carroll: 318-428-2381

West Feliciana: 225-635-6161

Winn: 318-628-6133

