

House Committee on Ways and Means

Minutes of Meeting
2022 Regular Session
March 22, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Stuart J. Bishop, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, called the meeting to order at 8:59 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Stuart J. Bishop, chairman
Representative Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV, vice chairman
Representative Ryan Bourriaque
Representative Marcus Anthony Bryant
Representative Rhonda Gaye Butler
Representative Phillip R. DeVillier
Representative Les Farnum
Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe
Representative Tanner D. Magee
Representative Wayne McMahan
Representative Buddy Mincey, Jr.
Representative Joseph A. Orgeron
Representative Tammy T. Phelps
Representative Neil Riser
Representative Laurie Schlegel
Representative Malinda B. White
Representative Matthew Willard

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Mandie Landry

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brittany Lea, committee administrative assistant
Alison Pryor, senior attorney
Catherine Zeringue, attorney

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Angela McKnight, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**House Bill No. 329 by Representative Zeringue**

Representative Zeringue presented House Bill No. 329, which provides for the payment of certain judgments issued by the Board of Tax Appeals for approved claims.

Representative Beaulieu in the chair.

Representative Beaulieu offered a motion to report House Bill No. 329 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 329 was reported favorably by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bourriaque, Bryant, Butler, DeVillier, Farnum, LaCombe, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Schlegel, White, and Willard voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 230 by Representative Bishop

On behalf of Representative Bishop, Representative Bryant presented House Bill No. 230, which extends the deadline for applying for rebates in the Louisiana Quality Jobs Program.

Ms. Mandi Mitchell, president and chief executive officer, Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA), Louisiana Industrial Development Executives Association (LIDEA), 211 East Devalcourt Street, Lafayette, LA 70506, (337) 593-1400, spoke in support of House Bill No. 329.

Representative Bryant offered a motion to report House Bill No. 230 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 230 was reported favorably by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bishop, Beaulieu, Bourriaque, Bryant, Butler, DeVillier, Farnum, LaCombe, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Schlegel, White, and Willard voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 9 in support and 1 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Chairman Bishop in the chair.

House Bill No. 331 by Representative McFarland

Representative McFarland presented House Bill No. 331, which provides relative to the application of the timber severance tax.

Dr. Mike Strain, commissioner, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF), 900 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 522-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 331.

Representative White offered a motion to report House Bill No. 331 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 331 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bishop, Beaulieu, Bryant, Butler, Farnum, LaCombe, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Schlegel, White, and Willard voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 599 by Representative Beaulieu

Representative Beaulieu presented House Bill No. 599, a constitutional amendment which provides for a property tax exemption for certain veterans with disabilities.

Representative Bishop offered amendments which: (1) delete provisions in present constitution which provide for an additional \$7,500 homestead exemption for veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 100% unemployability or totally disabled; (2) delete provisions in present constitution which provide that the additional \$7,500 homestead exemption for veterans with 100% disability rating shall only apply in parishes in which a separate election was held and a majority of electors voted in favor of the exemption; (3) add provisions that create an ad valorem tax exemption that exempts the total assessed valuation of property which is receiving the homestead exemption and which is owned and occupied by a veteran with a service-connected disability rating of 100% unemployability or totally disabled; (4) make changes to constitutional ballot language; and (5) make technical changes.

Representative Kenny Cox, District 23, 781 Highway 494, Natchitoches, LA 71457, (855) 844-8583, spoke in sponsorship of this measure.

Representative Bishop offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bishop, Beaulieu, Bourriaque, Bryant, Butler, Farnum, LaCombe, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Schlegel, and Willard voted yea.

Representative Bishop offered a motion to report House Bill No. 599 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 599 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bishop, Beaulieu, Bourriaque, Butler, Farnum, LaCombe, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Schlegel, and Willard voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 637 by Representative Beaulieu

Representative Beaulieu presented House Bill No. 637, which authorizes an assessor to collect a fee from certain parties requesting assessment rolls or lists.

Representative Bishop offered a motion to report House Bill No. 637 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 637 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bishop, Beaulieu, Bourriaque, Butler, Farnum, LaCombe, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Schlegel, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 681 by Representative Schexnayder

Representative Schexnayder presented House Bill No. 681, a constitutional amendment which provides relative to state and local sales and use taxes.

Representative Bishop offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 681. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 681 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bishop, Beaulieu, Bourriaque, Butler, Farnum, LaCombe, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Riser, Schlegel, White, and Willard voted yea.

Witness card submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 14 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

1. To discuss capital outlay project requests and funding for Louisiana State University

Dr. William F. Tate, IV, president, Louisiana State University (LSU), 3810 West Lakeshore, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 578-2111, discussed priorities for Louisiana including agriculture, biomedical technology, coastal science research, cybersecurity, and energy research infrastructure.

Dr. Tate provided a handout entitled "FY23 Capital Outlay (HB 2) Priorities", Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Magee and Dr. Tate discussed the totality and justifiability of the capital outlay projects which total \$731 million.

Mr. Lombardo, associate vice president, Facility and Property Oversight, (225) 578-5455, no witness card submitted, provided additional information with regard to Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Magee and Mr. Lombardo discussed Phase I projects from last year and the upcoming Phase II, which will take place during this fiscal year.

Representative Magee, Dr. Tate, and Mr. Tony Lombardo discussed the schematic phase of the modern library at a new site on South Stadium Drive.

Representative Bourriaque and Dr. Tate discussed the critical importance of engaging the youth in the agriculture center and the value it brings to the citizens of the state.

Representative Farnum and Dr. Tate discussed in-state versus out-of-state students, the placement of college graduates, and the Louisiana economy.

Representative DeVillier and Dr. Tate discussed Eunice's campus and the return on investment.

Representative McMahan and Dr. Tate discussed the loss of the citizens in the rural communities located in the northern part of Louisiana and that improvement of the workforce will attract businesses to the state that will then invest in the communities.

Representative Butler and Dr. Tate discussed dual enrollment and rural communities.

Representative White and Dr. Tate discussed Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) with regard to the rural communities in Louisiana, and outlining the future priorities of LSU.

Representative Phelps stated the importance of education rather than athletics of our university students.

2. To discuss capital outlay project requests and funding for Louisiana Community and Technical College System

Dr. Monty Sullivan, president, Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), 265 South Foster Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 922-1643, discussed the importance of community and technical colleges that strive to produce taxpayers that contribute to the state to

ensure economic growth and business competitiveness. Dr. Sullivan provided a handout, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Beaulieu in the chair.

Representative Bourriaque and Dr. Sullivan discussed the reasons why SOWELA Technical Community College was not listed on the capital outlay request list.

Representative White and Dr. Sullivan discussed how long it has been since any construction was done on any of the technical college system schools.

Dr. Sullivan stated that they educate their staff and leaders to understand the capital outlay process to ensure they are able to participate in capital outlay funding.

Representative LaCombe stated that when schools close, not only is it a loss of revenue, but the community loses the possibility of advancement.

Representative McMahan and Dr. Sullivan discussed the realization of the lack of nurses in the rural area during the COVID pandemic.

Representative Mincey stated that a low percentage rate of students graduate from four-year colleges and emphasized the importance of technical colleges.

Representative Farnum and Dr. Sullivan discussed local matches.

Chairman Bishop in the chair.

Representative Orgeron and Dr. Sullivan discussed the plans for the Donaldsonville area

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

3. To review and approve the third party convenience fee schedules for certain online transactions pursuant to R.S. 49:316.1 for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Mr. Alvin Henry, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), 2000 Quail Drive, LA 70808, (225) 765-2843, spoke for information only regarding the review and approval for third-party convenience fee schedules and provided a handout, Exhibit C, which is included in the committee records.

There was no further discussion.

Representative Beaulieu in the chair.

Representative Willard offered a motion to approve third-party convenience fee schedules for the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries pursuant to R.S. 49:316.1. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bourriaque, Butler, Farnum, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Riser, Schlegel, White, and Willard voted yea.

4. To review and approve the third party convenience fee schedules for certain online transactions pursuant to R.S. 49:316.1 for the Louisiana Department of Health/Office of Public Health

Mr. Timothy Williams and Mr. Greg Richard, Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Office of Public Health (OPH), 628 North 4th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9500, spoke for information only regarding the review and approval for third-party convenience fee schedules and provided a handout, Exhibit D, which is included in the committee records.

There was no further discussion.

Representative Willard offered a motion to approve third-party convenience fee schedules for the Louisiana Department of Health/Office of Public Health (LDH/OPH) pursuant to 49:316.1. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bishop, Beaulieu, Bourriaque, Butler, Farnum, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Riser, Schlegel, White, and Willard voted yea.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Willard offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bishop, Beaulieu, Bourriaque, Butler, Farnum, McMahan, Mincey, Orgeron, Riser, Schlegel, White, and Willard voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Stuart J. Bishop
House Committee on Ways and Means