

## **House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs**

Minutes of Meeting  
2023 Regular Session  
May 31, 2023

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Representative John M. Stefanski, chairman of the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, called the meeting to order at 9:14 a.m. in Room 3, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Representative John M. Stefanski, chairman  
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel  
Representative Les Farnum  
Representative Foy Bryan Gadberry  
Representative Sam L. Jenkins, Jr.  
Representative Michael T. Johnson  
Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe  
Representative Rodney Lyons, vice chairman  
Representative Tanner D. Magee  
Representative Richard James Nelson  
Representative Candace N. Newell  
Representative Polly Thomas

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Representative Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV  
Representative Wilford Dan Carter, Sr.  
Representative Barry Ivey  
Representative Malinda B. White

#### **STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Patricia Lowrey-Dufour, legislative analyst  
Annie Smith, attorney  
Rosalie Ammersbach, committee administrative assistant

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:**

Alex Stefanski, clerk  
Vivian Hurst, sergeant at arms

**III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION****Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 by Senator Womack**

Senator Womack presented Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31, which creates the Task Force on Louisiana Automated Grain Grading.

*Further action was taken by the committee on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 at a later point in the meeting. Please check subsequent action to complete the record of discussion and motions on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31.*

**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43 by Senator Bernard**

Senator Bernard presented Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43, which creates a task force to study the dissolution or absorption of fiscally distressed municipalities.

Mike Waguespack, office of Louisiana Legislative Auditor, P.O. Box 94397, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 339-3840, spoke for information only on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43.

*Further action was taken by the committee on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43 at a later point in the meeting. Please check subsequent action to complete the record of discussion and motions on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43.*

**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 by Senator Womack**

*This is a continuation of the discussion on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 from earlier in the meeting. Please check prior action to complete the record of discussion and motions on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31.*

Representative Magee offered a motion to report Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 favorably. Without objection, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 was reported favorably by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43 by Senator Bernard**

*This is a continuation of the discussion on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43 from earlier in the meeting. Please check prior action to complete the record of discussion and motions on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43.*

Representative Magee offered amendments to remove the Louisiana House of Representatives from the list of entities that may be called upon to staff the task force. Representative Magee offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

Representative Magee offered a motion to report Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 43 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

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

**House Concurrent Resolution No. 81 by Representative Echols**

Representative Echols presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 81, which establishes the ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor Commission.

Representative Stefanski offered amendments that:

- (1) Provided for staff support for the commission.
- (2) Changed the reporting date from February 1, 2024, to February 1, 2025.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

Representative Newell offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 81 with amendments. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 81 was reported with amendments by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

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 Resolution No. 179 by Representative Echols**

Representative Echols presented House Resolution No. 179, which requests the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism to study and make recommendations relative to repairs needed at the Pentagon Barracks.

Representative Stefanski offered amendments to change the report date from March 1, 2024, to April 15, 2024. Representative Stefanski offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

Representative Magee offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 179 with amendments. Without objection, House Resolution No. 179 was reported with amendments by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

### **House Concurrent Resolution No. 84 by Representative Jordan**

Representative Jordan presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 84, which creates the Task Force on African American Suicide Rates.

Representative Newell offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 84 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 84 was reported favorably by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

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

### **House Resolution No. 8 by Representative Boyd**

House Resolution No. 8 creates a special study committee to study the need for and obstacles to the installation of sidewalks at Edna Karr High School in New Orleans.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Resolution No. 8. Without objection, action on House Resolution No. 8 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

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

*Vice Chairman Lyons in the chair.*

### **Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45 by Senator Abraham**

On behalf of Senator Abraham, Representative Stefanski presented Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45, which creates the Task Force on Sentencing for Second Degree Murder to determine the best changes to sentencing for second degree murder.

Representative Thomas offered amendments relative to the provision of staffing for the task force. Representative Thomas offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea.

Andrew Hundley, Louisiana Parole Project, 319 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70801, (337) 831-2066, spoke in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45.

***Further action was taken by the committee on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45 at a later point in the meeting. Please check subsequent action to complete the record of discussion and motions on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45.***

### **House Resolution No. 130 by Representative Freeman**

Representative Freeman presented House Resolution No. 130, which creates a task force to study public health outcomes related to the criminalization of HIV.

Representative Lyons offered amendments to provide for the chairman of the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice to call the first meeting of the task force by September 1, 2023. Representative Lyons offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

Representative Newell offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 130 with amendments. Without objection, House Resolution No. 130 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 5 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45 by Senator Abraham**

*This is a continuation of the discussion on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45 from earlier in the meeting. Please check prior action to complete the record of discussion and motions on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45.*

Representative Magee offered a motion to withdraw the amendments that were adopted earlier in the meeting. Without objection, the amendments were withdrawn by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Magee, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

Representative Magee offered a motion to report Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45 without amendments. Without objection, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45 was reported without amendments by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Magee, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

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

The committee stood at ease at 10:35 a.m. The committee reconvened at 10:41 a.m.

**Senate Bill No. 137 by Senator Barrow**

Senator Barrow presented Senate Bill No. 137, which creates the Office of the State Child Ombudsman and the state child ombudsman.

Susan East Nelson, Louisiana Partnership for Children & Families, 13609 Landmark Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 229-2498, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 137.

Representative Stefanski offered amendments that:

- (1) Moved the state child ombudsman from the governor's office to the legislative auditor's office and eliminated the proposed creation of the Office of the State Child Ombudsman.
- (2) Required the ombudsman to notify the senator and representative representing the district in which a child has died within 24 hours of his knowledge of the death, rather than within 24 hours of the death.

- (3) Removed proposed law provisions regarding the following:
  - (a) Written acknowledgments from agencies contacted by the ombudsman.
  - (b) Access to records.
  - (c) Private communications with children or other persons.
  - (d) Applying for and accepting grants, donations, and bequests.
  - (e) Confidentiality and disclosure of certain information.
  - (f) Discrimination and retaliation against an employee who makes a complaint to or cooperates with the ombudsman.
- (4) Provided an effective date.
- (5) Made technical changes.

Mike Waguespack, office of Louisiana Legislative Auditor, P.O. Box 94397, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 339-3840, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 137.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Magee, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

Representative Newell offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 137 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 137 was reported with amendments by a vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Magee, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 1 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

#### IV. OTHER BUSINESS

##### **Legislative oversight of rules proposed by the Louisiana Board of Ethics relative to the food and drink limit**

Kathleen M. Allen, Louisiana Board of Ethics, P.O. Box 4368, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-5611, discussed the rules proposed by the Board of Ethics relative to the food and drink limit, Exhibit A, "Promulgation of Amended Rules Regarding Food and Drink Limit (LAC 52: I. Chapter 17, *Louisiana Register*, Volume 49, No. 4, April 20, 2023, Page 705)", which is in the committee records.

*Chairman Stefanski in the chair.*

Representative Newell offered a motion to find the proposed rules acceptable. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Farnum, Gadberry, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Magee, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea. Representative Stefanski abstained.

##### **Review of Candidate's Report Instructions (Form 102) submitted by the Louisiana Board of Ethics**

Kathleen M. Allen, Louisiana Board of Ethics, P.O. Box 4368, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-5611, discussed the Candidate's Report Instructions (Form 102) submitted by the Board of Ethics, Exhibit B, "Approval of Candidate's Report Instructions (Form 102 for the Louisiana Board of Ethics)", which is in the committee records.

##### **Review of proposed rules by the State Civil Service Commission regarding paid parental leave**

Byron Decoteau, Jr., State Civil Service, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-8272, discussed proposed rules by the State Civil Service Commission regarding paid parental leave, Exhibit C, which is in the committee records.

Sherri Gregoire, State Civil Service, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 3-280, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-4442, spoke for information only on Exhibit C.

*Representative Nelson in the chair.*

#### V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.



## VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Thomas offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Deshotel, Farnum, Gadberry, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Nelson, Newell, and Thomas voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman John M. Stefanski  
House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

Date adopted: