

## **House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice**

Minutes of Meeting  
2025 Regular Session  
May 14, 2025

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

Representative Debbie Villio, chair of the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. in Room 6, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Representative Debbie Villio, chair  
Representative Roy Daryl Adams  
Representative Tony Bacala  
Representative Chad Michael Boyer  
Representative Vincent E. Cox, III  
Representative Bryan Fontenot  
Representative Dodie Horton  
Representative Alonzo L. Knox  
Representative Vanessa Caston LaFleur, vice chair  
Representative Patricia "Pat" Moore  
Representative Joy Walters  
Representative Jeffrey Fons "Jeff" Wiley

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

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

Zachary Gonzalez, attorney  
Dave Storment, attorney  
Ross Richard, committee administrative assistant  
Andrea Jerezano, committee administrative assistant

#### **ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:**

Janet Anthony, sergeant at arms  
Michael McCain, clerk

Amelia Carman, clerk  
Don-trae' Davis, clerk

### **III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**

#### **Senate Bill No. 154 by Senator Morris**

Senator Morris presented Senate Bill No. 154, which criminalizes the possession or distribution of kratom.

Dr. Pete Croughan, Louisiana Department of Health, 628 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 154.

Zachary T. Daniels, Louisiana District Attorneys Association, 2525 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 154.

David Lubrano, Sr., 8717 25th Street, Metairie, LA 70003, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 154.

Tara Ledoux, 5329 Shamrops Drive, Kenner, LA 70065, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 154.

Steven McCain, Grant Parish Sheriff, 205 Cypress Street, Colfax, LA 71417, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 154 and presented a PowerPoint, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Dr. Smita Prasad, Louisiana State Medical Society, 30792 Carter Cemetery Road, Springfield, LA 70462, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 154.

Rebecca Chiasson, Louisiana State Police Crime Lab, 376 East Airport Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 154.

Troy D'Albor, 7706 Main Highway, St. Martinville, LA 70582, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 154.

Matthew Lowe, Global Kratom Coalition, 2522 Bundy Drive, Santa Monica, CA 90064, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 154.

John M. Chouccoli, 1924 Southland Court, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 154.

Lee-Ann Pierson, 946 Tanglebriar Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 154.

Adam Peak, Bella Sunrise Smoke Shop, 6010 Jones Creek Road, Suite D, Baton Rouge, LA 70817, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 154.

John Shinholser, American Veterans for Kratom Safety, 435 Haley Court, Ashland, VA 23005, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 154.

Mac Haddow, American Kratom Association, 13575 Heathcote Boulevard #320, Gainesville, VA 20155, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 154.

Bobby LeBlanc, 221 Destiny Place, Houma, LA 70360, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 154.

Representative Horton offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 154 favorably, to which Representative Boyer objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and Senate Bill No. 154 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 1 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea. Representative Boyer voted nay.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 10 in support and 15 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Prepared statements were received via email for Senate Bill No. 154.

### **House Bill No. 573 by Representative Jordan**

Representative Villio announced that action on House Bill No. 573, which provides for collection and reporting of data, was voluntarily deferred.

### **Senate Bill No. 38 by Senator Hensgens**

Senator Hensgens presented Senate Bill No. 38, which creates the crime of theft of gift cards or gift card redemption information.

Representative Villio offered an amendment to clarify that restitution shall be made in accordance with present law (Code of Criminal Procedure Article 883.2). Representative Villio offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendment. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 7 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Horton, LaFleur, Moore, and Wiley voted yea.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 38 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 38 was reported with amendments by a vote of 7 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Horton, LaFleur, Moore, and Wiley voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 5 in support, 1 for information only, and 1 designee of an elected official. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Prepared statements were received via email for Senate Bill No. 38.

### **House Bill No. 277 by Representative Jordan**

Representative Jordan presented House Bill No. 277, which provides relative to certain pretrial procedures.

On behalf of the author, Representative Villio offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes.
- (2) Restore provisions of present law and remove provisions of proposed law relative to a speedy trial.

Representative Villio offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, LaFleur, Moore, and Wiley voted yea.

Alanah Odoms, American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana, 1340 Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70113, spoke in support of House Bill No. 277.

Meghan Garvey, Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Post Office Box 83, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, spoke in support of House Bill No. 277.

Kathleen B. Heap, office of Nineteenth Judicial District Attorney Hillar Moore, 222 Saint Louis Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 277.

Zachary T. Daniels, Louisiana District Attorneys Association, 2525 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 277.

Representative Villio offered an amendment to restore provisions in present law and remove provisions of proposed law relative to a court order for a preliminary examination before and after indictment, subpoena duces tecum, and service of subpoena by the sheriff.

Representative Villio offered a motion to adopt the amendment. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Representative LaFleur offered a motion to report House Bill No. 277 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 277 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 10 in support and 3 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

#### **Senate Bill No. 21 by Senator Wheat**

On behalf of the author, Representative Villio presented Senate Bill No. 21, which adds veterinarians and veterinary clinics to the definitions of "healthcare professional" and "healthcare facility" for purposes of certain assault and battery offenses.

Representative Villio offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 21 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 21 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

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

#### **House Bill No. 6 by Representative Jackson**

Representative Jackson presented House Bill No. 6, which creates the crime of misappropriation of funds in connection with the payment of utility services.

On behalf of the author, Representative LaFleur offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes.
- (2) Change the penalties in proposed law from imprisonment at hard labor for not more than ten years, fined not more than \$100,000, or both, to the penalties contained in the present law offense of theft (R.S. 14:67).
- (3) Clarify proposed law provisions relative to payment of restitution.
- (4) Clarify the definition of "person".
- (5) Remove the proposed law offense of misappropriation of funds in connection with the payment of utility services from the present law (R.S. 14:230.1) list of offenses where all facilitating property, proceeds, and commingled funds are required to be seized and forfeited if involved or derived from such offenses.

- (6) Remove proposed law offense from the list of present law offenses that constitute "racketeering activity" under the Louisiana Racketeering Act.
- (7) Remove the directive to the Louisiana State law Institute to renumber provisions of present law (R.S. 15:1352(A)) so as to properly place proposed law.

Zachary T. Daniels, Louisiana District Attorneys Association, 2525 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 6.

Representative LaFleur offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Representative Bacala offered an amendment to clarify the definition of "utility services". Representative Bacala offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendment. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 7 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Representative Knox offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 6.

Representative Knox withdrew his motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 6.

Jody Montelaro, Entergy, 446 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in support of House Bill No. 6.

Jim Rather, The Apartment Association of Louisiana, 3017 Harvard Avenue, Suite 201, Metairie, LA 70006, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 6.

Tammy Sponge, The Apartment Association of Louisiana, 3017 Harvard Avenue, Suite 201, Metairie, LA 70006, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 6.

Representative Walters offered a motion to report House Bill No. 6 with amendments, to which Representative Villio objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and House Bill No. 6 was reported with amendments by a vote of 8 yeas and 2 nays. Representatives Bacala, Boyer, Fontenot, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea. Representatives Villio and Horton voted nay.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 6 in support and 9 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

**Senate Bill No. 22 by Senator Hodges**

Senator Hodges presented Senate Bill No. 22, which creates the crime of theft of critical infrastructure.

On behalf of the author, Representative Villio offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes.
- (2) Restructure the definition of "critical infrastructure".
- (3) Add equipment and communication wires that are connected to certain facilities to the definition of "critical infrastructure".

Representative Villio offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Representative Knox offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 22 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 22 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 18 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

**House Bill No. 5 by Representative Jackson**

Representative Jackson presented House Bill No. 5, which provides relative to the crime of soliciting for prostitutes.

On behalf of the author, Representative Horton offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes.
- (2) Within the present law crime (R.S. 14:82.2) of purchase of commercial sexual activity, change the penalties as follows:
  - (a) For first offense, change the maximum fine from \$750 to \$1,000 and change the maximum term of imprisonment from six months to one year with or without hard labor.

- (b) For an offense involving a person under eighteen years of age or a person the offender knows to be a victim of human trafficking or trafficking of children for sexual purposes, change the minimum fine from \$3,000 to \$5,000.
- (c) For an offense involving a person under fourteen years of age, change the minimum fine from \$5,000 to \$10,000.
- (3) Provide eligibility for specialized services that are provided to victims of the present law crimes of human trafficking or trafficking of children for sexual purposes to any child who is identified to be a victim of the present law crime of soliciting for prostitutes (R.S. 14:83).
- (4) Clarify that no victim of the present law crime of soliciting for prostitutes (R.S. 14:83) shall be prosecuted for a violation of soliciting for prostitutes if such a violation is committed as a direct result of being trafficked.
- (5) Clarify that any other person who is eighteen years of age or older who is identified as a victim of the present law crime of soliciting for prostitutes (R.S. 14:83) shall be notified of any treatment or specialized services for sexually exploited persons to the extent that such services are available.
- (6) Designate as a sex offense the present law crime of soliciting for prostitutes when the person being solicited is under the age of eighteen or under the age of fourteen rather than a second subsequent offense of soliciting for prostitutes.

Mary Kate Andrepont, Governor's Office of Human Trafficking Prevention, no address provided, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 5.

Representative Horton offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Representative LaFleur offered a motion to report House Bill No. 5 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 5 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

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



**House Concurrent Resolution No. 35 by Representative Villio**

Representative Villio announced that action on House Concurrent Resolution No. 35, which requests the Louisiana State Law Institute to conduct a review of "Duncan misdemeanors" that are located throughout the Louisiana Revised Statutes, was voluntarily deferred.

**House Bill No. 128 by Representative Wilford Carter**

Representative Villio announced that action on House Bill No. 128, which provides relative to sentencing guidelines, was voluntarily deferred.

**House Bill No. 262 by Representative Phelps**

Representative Villio announced that action on House Bill No. 262, which provides relative to the removal of unauthorized persons from immovable property, was voluntarily deferred.

**House Bill No. 426 by Representative Wilford Carter**

Representative Villio announced that action on House Bill No. 426, which provides for the factors in fixing the amount of bail and modifications of bail, was voluntarily deferred.

**House Bill No. 457 by Representative Marcelle**

Representative Villio announced that action on House Bill No. 457, which provides relative to solitary confinement, was voluntarily deferred.

**IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Debbie Villio  
House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice