

House Committee on Civil Law and Procedure

Minutes of Meeting
2025 Regular Session
May 6, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Nicholas Muscarello, Jr., chair of the House Committee on Civil Law and Procedure, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Nicholas Muscarello, Jr., chair
Representative Chad Brown
Representative Josh Carlson
Representative Wilford Dan Carter, Sr.
Representative Emily Chenevert
Representative Kathy Edmonston
Representative Peter F. Egan, Sr.
Representative Brian Leonard Glorioso
Representative Michael T. Johnson
Representative Ed Larvadain, III
Representative Michael Melerine
Representative Sylvia Elaine Taylor
Representative Christopher Turner, vice chair
Representative John E. Wyble

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Lauren Ventrella
Representative Mark Wright

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Allison Alonzo, attorney
Jennifer Nguyen, attorney
Andrea Jerezano, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Michael McCain, clerk
Harry Mulcahy, clerk
Martin Mapp Jr., sergeant at arms
Angela McKnight, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**House Bill No. 294 by Representative Bagley**

Representative Bagley presented House Bill No. 294, a constitutional amendment which provides relative to severance tax revenues remitted to parishes in which the associated severance occurs.

Representative Muscarello offered a motion to adopt the House Rule 6.8(A) Report to House Bill No. 294, which stated that the measure could not be accomplished statutorily and would, therefore, require a constitutional amendment. Without objection, the House Rule 6.8(A) Report to House Bill No. 294 was adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Melerine, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

Representative Melerine offered a motion to report House Bill No. 294 without amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 294 was reported without amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Melerine, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support and 2 designees of an elected official. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 98 by Representative Young

Representative Young presented House Bill No. 98, which authorizes the parish of Lincoln to expropriate property by a declaration of taking.

Representative Muscarello offered a technical amendment. Representative Muscarello offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendment. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Melerine, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

Representative Edmonston offered a motion to report House Bill No. 98 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 98 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Melerine, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

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

House Bill No. 72 by Representative Dewitt

Representative Dewitt presented House Bill No. 72, which provides relative to prescription of certain debts.

Stacey Landry, section chief - collections, 1885 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke as a designee of the attorney general in support of House Bill No. 72.

Representative Muscarello offered a motion to report House Bill No. 72 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 72 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, and Turner voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 designee of an elected official. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 75 by Senator Miller

Senator Miller presented Senate Bill No. 75, which provides for legislative continuances and extensions of time for legislators and legislative employees.

Representative Muscarello offered amendments to make technical changes and to remove language specifying that provisions of proposed law would apply to cases heard before the Louisiana Supreme Court. Representative Muscarello offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

Representative Wyble offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 75 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 75 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

House Bill No. 371 by Representative Amedee

Representative Amedee presented House Bill No. 371, which provides relative to the free exercise of religion.

Representative Muscarello offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes.
- (2) Make reference to Article 12, Section 17 of the Louisiana Constitution with respect to the legislative findings for the Preservation of Religious Freedom Act.
- (3) Expand the definition of "compelling state interest" and "exercise of religion".
- (4) Change that a violation of the Preservation of Religious Freedom Act is asserted as a claim or defense in an administrative proceeding rather than a judicial proceeding.
- (5) Expand the remedies to include court-approved expert witness fees.
- (6) Provide that a person shall bring an action to assert a claim for damages not later than one year after the date that an action was dismissed by an administrative law judge or a court, or there was a finding in favor of the person on the merit which resulted in a claim authorized pursuant to the Preservation of Religious Freedom Act.
- (7) Provide that an action can be asserted no later than one year from the seventy-fifth day after the date on which the notice is mailed pursuant to R.S. 13:5238.
- (8) Remove synagogue and temple.

Representative Muscarello offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

Richard Mast, Liberty counsel, P. O. Box 540774, Orlando, FL 32854, spoke in support of House Bill No. 371.

Jim Wolfe, Ridge Avenue Baptist Church, 1009 Ridge Avenue, West Monroe, LA 71291, spoke in support of House Bill No. 371.

Dr. Will Hall, Louisiana Baptist Office of Public Policy, 1250 MacArthur Drive, Alexandria, LA 71309, spoke in support of House Bill No. 371.

Representative Muscarello offered an amendment to provide an effective date. Representative Muscarello offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendment. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

Representative Chenevert offered a motion to report House Bill No. 371 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 371 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 371.

Representative Turner in the chair.

House Bill No. 56 by Representative Horton

Representative Horton presented House Bill No. 56, which provides relative to the freedom to display the flag of the United States.

John Niquiporo, 39389 Oceanview Avenue, Prairieville, LA 70769, spoke in support of House Bill No. 56.

Representative Brown offered a motion to report House Bill No. 56 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 56 was reported favorably by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Brown, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble 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.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 56.

Senate Bill No. 5 by Senator Wheat

Senator Wheat presented Senate Bill No. 5, which provides for the jurisdictional limit for the City Court of Hammond.

Judge Britain Sledge, Hammond City Court, 303 East Thomas Street, Hammond, LA 70401, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 5.

Representative Brown offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 5 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 5 was reported favorably by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Brown, Chenevert, Edmonston, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

House Bill No. 140 by Representative Farnum

Representative Farnum presented House Bill No. 140, which provides relative to residential home improvements.

David Cromwell, reporter, Louisiana State Law Institute, Room W121, LSU Law Center, 1 East Campus Drive, Baton Rouge, LA, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 140.

At the request of the author, Representative Turner offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 140. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 140 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Melerine, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

House Bill No. 289 by Representative Carrier

Representative Carrier presented House Bill No. 289, which provides relative to civil liability of firearm and ammunition manufacturers and distributors.

Representative Turner offered amendments to make technical changes and to remove the provision providing that if a civil action precluded by present law is brought, the defendant may recover all expenses resulting from such action from the entity bringing the action. Representative Turner offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

Kelby Seanor, National Rifle Association, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030, spoke in support of House Bill No. 289.

Representative Edmonston offered a motion to report House Bill No. 289 with amendments, to which Representative Larvadain objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and House Bill No. 289 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 2 nays. Representatives Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Melerine, Turner, and Wyble voted yea. Representatives Larvadain and Taylor voted nay.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 289.

House Bill No. 247 by Representative Chenevert

Representative Chenevert presented House Bill No. 247, which provides relative to the expropriation of blighted property in East Baton Rouge Parish and the city of Baton Rouge, and she provided a letter from the office of the mayor-president, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Gregory Anding, Kean Miller LLP, 400 Convention Street, Suite 700, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in support of House Bill No. 247.

Rodney Braxton, Build Baton Rouge, 543 Spanish Town Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in support of House Bill No. 247.

Representative Chenevert offered a motion to report House Bill No. 247 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 247 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yeas.

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

House Bill No. 217 by Representative Mena

At the request of Representative Mena, Representative Turner offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 217, which provides for legislative continuances and extensions of time for legislators and legislative employees. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 217 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Brown, Carlson, Wilford Carter, Egan, Mike Johnson, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yeas.

The committee recessed at 11:14 a.m. The committee reconvened at 11:20 a.m.

Representative Muscarello in the chair.

House Bill No. 287 by Representative Bacala

Representative Bacala presented House Bill No. 287, which authorizes certain out-of-state insurance companies to apply respective state laws to claims of Louisiana residents. Representative Bacala offered an amendment in the form of a substitute bill.

Adam Patrick, Louisiana Department of Insurance, 1702 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 287.

Representative W. Carter asked, as a point of order, if the substitute bill was germane to the original bill. Representative Muscarello ruled that the substitute bill was not germane to the original bill.

At the request of Representative Bacala, Representative Muscarello offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 287. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 287 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Wilford Carter, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Larvadain, Taylor, and Wyble voted yeas.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support and 2 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

The committee stood at ease at 11:42 a.m. The committee reconvened at 11:47 a.m.

House Bill No. 473 by Representative Emerson

Representative Emerson presented House Bill No. 473, a constitutional amendment which provides relative to the application of state monies to the unfunded accrued liability of the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana.

Representative Wyble offered a motion to adopt the House Rule 6.8(A) Report to House Bill No. 473, which stated that the measure could not be accomplished statutorily and would, therefore, require a constitutional amendment. Without objection, the House Rule 6.8(A) Report to House Bill No. 473 was adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yeas.

Representative Wyble offered a motion to report House Bill No. 473 without amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 473 was reported without amendments by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Wilford Carter, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yeas.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, 2 in opposition, and 1 designee of an elected official. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 678 by Representative Emerson

Representative Emerson presented House Bill No. 678, a constitutional amendment which modifies disposition of certain state revenues through repeal of the Revenue Stabilization Trust Fund and deposits of certain revenue streams into the Budget Stabilization Fund.

Representative Melerine offered a motion to adopt the House Rule 6.8(A) Report to House Bill No. 678, which stated that the measure could not be accomplished statutorily and would, therefore, require a constitutional amendment. Without objection, the House Rule 6.8(A) Report to House Bill No. 678 was adopted by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Wilford Carter, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yeas.

Representative Melerine offered a technical amendment. Representative Melerine offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendment. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 13

yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Wilford Carter, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble voted yea.

Representative Melerine offered a motion to report House Bill No. 678 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 678 was reported with amendments by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Muscarello, Brown, Carlson, Wilford Carter, Chenevert, Edmonston, Egan, Glorioso, Mike Johnson, Larvadain, Melerine, Taylor, Turner, and Wyble 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.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Nicholas Muscarello, Jr.
House Committee on Civil Law and Procedure