

2011 REGULAR SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

State Budget

Legislature decreased total spending by \$1.5 billion while protecting vital services and balanced the budget without selling state prisons or the Office of Group Benefits.

House Resolution 27 prohibits the use of “one-time money” for ordinary recurring expenses without a two-thirds majority vote.

Higher Education

Act 418 amends the GRAD Act by granting public postsecondary education institutions additional financial autonomy for meeting certain graduation rate, program completer, and student retention rate targets.

Act 419 transfers UNO from the LSU System to the UL System.

Elementary and High School Students

Act 203 amends high school core curriculum requirements for TOPS Opportunity, Performance, or Honors awards eligibility beginning with the 2013–2014 school year.

Act 60 requires students to maintain a minimum “C” average to participate in interscholastic athletics.

Act 193 requires the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections to deny or cancel the school bus driver endorsement of anyone convicted of DUI until completion of a substance abuse program.

Health Care

Act 350 requires health insurers to continue to offer the same prescription drug coverage throughout a contract period and to notify enrollees of any change in coverage at least 60 days prior to the plan renewal date.

Act 299 requires the Dept. of Health and Hospitals to address the delivery of quality home- and community-based services and amends licensing standards regarding direct service workers.

Public Safety

Act 70 allows the Office of State Police to coordinate the state’s missing and exploited children database with the National Crime Information Center in real time.

Act 26 bans sex offenders from accessing social networking websites when the victim was a minor or the offense was video voyeurism.

Act 67 increases penalties for the sexual abuse of a person who is at least 65 years old or has a physical or mental disability.

Act 64 expands the crimes of human trafficking and trafficking of children for sexual purposes to include aiding and abetting or benefiting in any way from the trafficking activity.

Act 420 bans the manufacture, possession, or use of synthetic marijuana and bath salts.

Act 253 makes certain nonviolent, low-risk inmates who have served at least 10 years of imprisonment eligible for parole consideration at the age of 60.

Tax Relief & Incentives

Act 121 increases the maximum tuition tax deduction for nonpublic schools and public lab schools to \$5,000 per child.

Act 410 extends the deadline for applications for tax credits and rebates under the La. Quality Jobs Program until 2018.

Act 414 restarts the Angel Investor Tax Credit program for investors who lend to business startups.

Housing

Act 408 consolidates the state’s multiple housing agencies into the new Louisiana Housing Corporation, which will oversee all public entities involved in financing housing for low- and moderate-income families.

Military Affairs

Act 406 provides retroactive death and disability benefits for members of the Louisiana National Guard who died or were disabled in the line of duty between September 11, 2001, and 2007.

Act 59 allows veterans to choose the manner in which their Honor Medal is delivered.

Act 191 requires public colleges and universities to award educational credits to students who are veterans for military training courses that meet American Council on Education standards.

Death Benefits

Act 157 provides benefits for the surviving family of a state employee who dies while conducting an investigation, serving a court order, or collecting evidence concerning a possible violation of state law.

Abortion

Act 411 requires any licensed abortion facility to display a clearly visible sign advising women of their rights and of the state’s pregnancy resources website.

Coastline Boundary of Louisiana

Act 336 extends the boundary of the state of Louisiana and claims for the state all lands and resources underlying the Gulf of Mexico within the boundary.

Government Transparency

Act 188 prohibits a public body from discussing the award of a contract in a closed meeting.

Immigration Reform

Acts 402 and 376 require all employers to verify the legal status of employees through the federal E-Verify system or with a picture ID and additional documentation in order to avoid civil penalties or to bid on public contract work.

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

October 22, 2011, Election

TOPS/Cigarette Tax Renewal

Senate Bill 53 would dedicate all annual Tobacco Settlement proceeds to help fund the TOPS program; and would make permanent the four-cent cigarette tax and dedicate its receipts to the Health Excellence Fund.

Retirement Systems

House Bill 384 would dedicate a minimum of 5% of nonrecurring money in FY2014 and FY2015 and a minimum of 10% each year thereafter for additional payments to the unfunded accrued liability of the La. State Employees Retirement System and the Teachers Retirement System of La.

Rainy Day Fund

Senate Bill 147 would delay the required deposit of mineral revenues into the Budget Stabilization Fund until the third fiscal year after the use of monies in the fund and would limit annual deposits to one-third of the most recent amount appropriated from the fund.

Medical Malpractice Fund

House Bill 341 would authorize the establishment of the Patient’s Compensation Fund for the protection of medical malpractice claimants and private health care providers.

November 19, 2011, Election

Sale of Immovable Property

House Bill 135 would prohibit new taxes or fees by the state and its political subdivisions on the sale or transfer of immovable property after November 30, 2011.

For more information, visit:

www.legis.state.la.us

