



NEWSLETTER NO. 7

ELLEVATE LOUISIANA



ELLEVATE LOUISIANA WAS FOUNDED IN 2020 TO EMPOWER WOMEN LEADERS THROUGHOUT LOUISIANA BY CONNECTING AND EDUCATING THEM ON THE CHALLENGES IMPACTING OUR STATE WITH DATA-DRIVEN, NON-PARTISAN SOLUTIONS TO MAKE A BETTER FUTURE FOR LOUISIANA.

"SINE DIE" or "ADJOURNED"

Months of legislative session adjourned on Monday, culminating in many changes in Louisiana Law and a tired legislature finally being able to go home for at least a couple of months. One could argue that many Louisianians feel polarized after this 2024 session, a mirror of the state of politics nationwide as we head into a Presidential election. But many, especially in the Senate, have felt that the 2024 legislative session was a win for bipartisanship. Many seasoned legislators noted that cooperation and communication were evident throughout session, and that should certainly be applauded. Regarding Ellevate's 2024 Policy Positions, there were some great wins, some hard losses, and some work left undone. Let's review!

HEALTH & WELLNESS ISSUES:

- SB145 creating a state child ombudsman has been sent to the Governor and that is a good start to addressing the prevalence of child abuse/neglect in Louisiana. However, the Whole Health Louisiana State Plan remains unfunded, begging the question of whether state government is willing to invest in these children.
- SB190 calling for the development of a plan to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates has been signed by the Governor as Act 306. Unfortunately, Louisiana needs more than a just a plan for increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates – funding is required to make those increases a reality. Our state's very low reimbursement rates are at the heart of the larger problem with access to care. Few doctors are willing to provide services to the Medicaid population because Medicaid reimbursements are just too low.

- We were pleased to see the continued investment of \$7M for domestic violence victims. Thank you to House Appropriations Committee for putting this funding back into HBI.
- We were disappointed that support was not there for maternal and child health. Both SB135 and SB142 got held up in committee and did not make it out of session. These bills would have required Medicaid coverage for certain pregnancy and postpartum care as well as Doula services, respectively.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE RESTRUCTURING:

- SB494 renamed the Department of Economic Development to Louisiana Economic Development. More importantly, the bill added a nonprofit arm of LED to lend consistency of leadership across administrations and gave LED the ability to write its own procurement regulations so that it can act “at the speed of business” in attracting business to our state.
- SB293 designated the Louisiana Workforce Commission as the primary contact for workforce solutions through workforce and educational agencies of the state. It also calls various systems (Regents, LCTCS, LSU, LED, DOE, DPSC, & DCFS) to coordinate in addressing workforce solutions and preparing recommendations for workforce development. It further gives the Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy Center, regional economic development organizations and other local organizations the mandate to make recommendations. It then allows the secretary to realign workforce systems as necessary given these recommendations. Systems are called to develop pathways for college and high school students to get training to increase workforce participation.

EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS:

- The Child Care Assistance Program was funded at \$78 million, or 90% of last year’s investment, which was considered a win for Early Childhood Care and Education, but cuts were made, and 800 seats will be lost.
- SB433 which provided for the creation of an ECE data dashboard had bipartisan support but failed to make it through the legislative process.
- HB728 lowered the age of eligibility for the M.J. Foster Promise Program from 21 to 17 over the next three years and SB272 increased the yearly appropriation limit for the program from \$10.5 million to \$40 million. However, funding above the current \$10.5 million was not secured, thus not really improving anything for next year.

COASTAL CONCERNS:

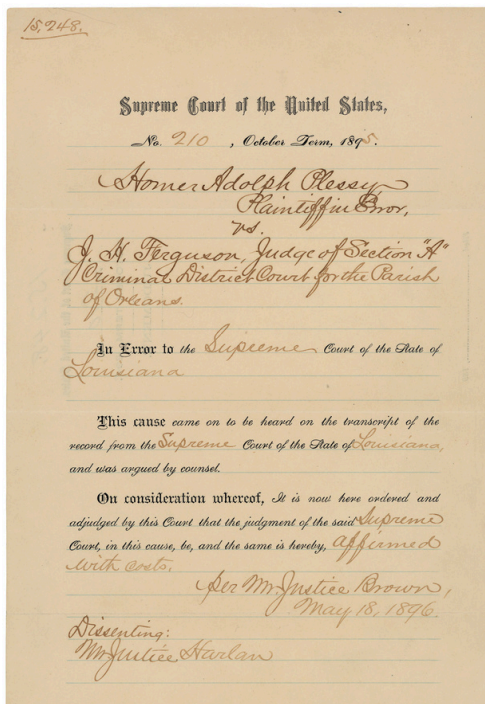
- HB806 outlines significant changes in the makeup of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and HB810 outlines a restructuring of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources including the addition of three new offices: Enforcement, energy, and land and water. These bills and talk during the session give Ellevate pause as to the future of CPRA as a stand-alone entity.
- HB300 and HB305, a proposed constitutional amendment and its statutory companion, both passed the Senate. These will deposit alternative energy production revenues into the CPRA Fund (if approved by the voters) which is crucial to offset an impending “coastal fiscal cliff” in 2032.

Adjourned, but not complete. Much was accomplished, yet so much more remains to be done. We will be monitoring the changes that result from this legislative session as we begin to prepare for the 2025 (fiscal) session. For now, a well-deserved rest is in order.

By: Julie Stokes, *Ellevate Louisiana CEO & President*

The Winding Path to a Constitutional Convention

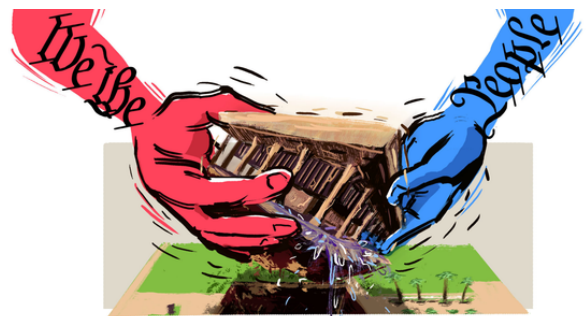
Upon entering office this year, Gov. Jeff Landry and his supporters highlighted their plans to hold a state constitutional convention following the 2024 Regular Session which concluded on Monday, June 3. During Ellevate's 5th Annual Legislative Leadership Conference in March 2024, several members of the legislature, including HB800 sponsor Beau Beaulieu, spoke in support of a convention that would reform what they referred to as our "antiquated and excessively lengthy" governing document.



Louisiana's constitution was adopted in 1874 – 50 years ago – but only after an effort that lasted several years. The former constitutional revision process was also different in that voters directly elected delegates to serve at the convention for a full year. [1] "Landry's Convention," outlined in HB800 of the 2024 Regular Session, would not have allowed the public to vote on delegates and would have lasted for two weeks, expediting the process and inevitably restricting public discourse. Ultimately, HB800 was stalled in the Senate after it was referred to the Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs on May 8 where the chairman, Sen. Cleo Fields, deliberately left it off the committee agenda, per his interview with WBRZ. [2]

Supporters of the constitutional convention have consistently argued that the state's constitution is too large and all-encompassing. Based on word length alone, our 72,000+ word state constitution is nearly twice that of the national average: 39,000 words. This includes more than 200 amendments over the last fifty years, many of which relate to tax and other fiscal policy. Additionally, Louisiana's total of 10 constitutions is nearly four times greater than the national average of 2.88. We have already adopted the most constitutions of any state, and several of our southern peers: Georgia, Alabama, Virginia, Florida, and South Carolina, follow directly behind us. [3] This may be a product of several factors including the region's heightened social and political challenges during Reconstruction, the Jim Crow era, and beyond.

While holding a constitutional convention was a legislative priority for the Landry administration, many were unclear on the exact goals. The push for HB800 prompted speculation that the goal was to remove tax and other fiscal provisions from the constitution to make it easier to legislate tax reforms that will be proposed during the upcoming Fiscal Session in 2025. Furthermore, Louisiana faces a



looming fiscal cliff due to a 0.45% state sales tax that expires on June 30, 2025. Many also suspected that part of the motivation for the convention was to do financial reshuffling amongst constitutionally protected funds to offset the impact of the fiscal cliff. [4] The lack of information on the exact goals of the convention may have been what prompted several senators, including Chairman Fields and Senate President Cameron Henry, to be wary of supporting HB800.



Conversely, the advocates of holding the convention stated that they only wanted to move provisions of the constitution over to statute so that the official document would be more streamlined, potentially making a convention appear less dangerous to critics. They stressed that delegates would likely not change the content of any provisions nor eliminate them. Rather, the delegates would focus on deciding which provisions are best suited to remain in the constitution and which should be moved into statute. However, HB800

did give latitude to the delegates to alter content as they saw fit. Additionally, moving provisions to statute makes future changes to those statutes much less rigorous, making it easier for legislators in a subsequent session to propose significant changes to policy, especially with a supermajority.

When passing Beaulieu's HB800 became difficult, other proposals were floated. One such proposal was that a select committee would be created to hear testimony in June and July. This committee would later recommend a path forward to a constitutional convention beginning on August 1, 2024. This proposal was not able to pass in the Senate either; however, both Senate President Henry and House Speaker DeVillier have the authority to establish a select committee to carry out the hearings, which could still lead to a convention in August. [5] But, as Henry stated, "Members aren't really jumping at the chance to come back to Baton Rouge." [6]

Ultimately, Ellevate will continue to follow proposals for a constitutional convention, advocating for a process that allows non-governmental actors to weigh in and protects the rights and progress that Louisiana has made in all areas.



BY: AMANDA TOOLE
ELLEVATE LOUISIANA INTERN

[1] "Louisiana Constitutional Convention." Invest in Louisiana, https://investlouisiana.org/la-con-con/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwpNuyBhCuARIsANJqL9MdsI_NnOVbmJ2FL9GwB6vZ7RW0awbT0VhF9emU6b_PfDZ--RhWUAgaAsmKEALw_wcB. Accessed 3 June 2024.

[2] WBRZ Staff. "Sen. Cleo Fields says House bill laying out plan for constitutional convention idea is dead." WBRZ, 28 May 2024, <https://www.wbrz.com/news/sen-cleo-fields-says-house-bill-laying-out-plan-for-constitutional-convention-idea-is-dead/>. Accessed 3 June 2024.

[3] "State Constitution." Ballotpedia, https://ballotpedia.org/State_constitution. Accessed 3 June 2024.

[4] Carson, Jamie. "The looming fiscal cliff." Invest in Louisiana, January 2024, <https://investlouisiana.org/the-looming-fiscal-cliff/>. Accessed 3 June 2024.

[5] Staff writers. "Session ends with winners and losers." The Advocate, 4 June 2024, <https://advocate-la.newsmemory.com/?editionStart=Baton+Rouge>. Accessed 4 June 2024.

[6] Staff writers. "Session ends with winners and losers."

3. Redefine Success

- Move beyond financial metrics. How do you define success on a personal level?
- For inspiration, consider someone you would define as “successful”. What makes you view them that way? Is it the number of vacations they take, the time they have with family, the freedom they have in their schedule, or maybe how healthy they are?



4. Determine How You Have Done “Enough”

- In a world that is always driving us faster, farther, and higher, how do you define when you have done enough? My personal example: I have done enough as a mother when I have made my child feel seen, heard, and loved each day.
- Doing enough does not create a limit that stops you from doing more; instead, it creates an opportunity to allow time for self and pursuit of your other values and interests.

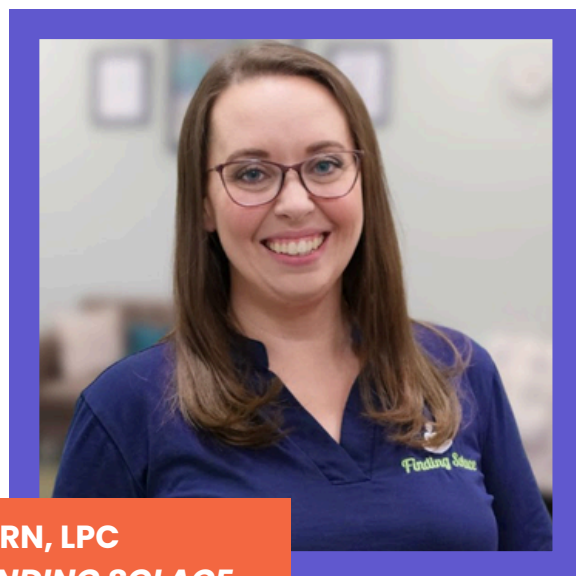
IMPLEMENTING YOUR GOALS

Once you have clarified your values and defined your goals, the next step is to implement them effectively. Here are some strategies to help you stay on track:

- **Set SMART Goals:** Ensure your goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This approach helps in maintaining focus and tracking progress.
- **Create a Visual Representation:** Whether a sticky note, a vision board, private journal, or something else, find a place to visualize and track your goals and aspirations. Use images, quotes, and symbols that excite you and represent your desired outcomes.
- **Regular Reflection:** Periodically review and adjust your goals every 30–90 days. Reflect on your achievements and challenges to stay aligned with your values.
- **Seek Support:** Surround yourself with a supportive network of mentors, peers, and friends who share your values and can provide guidance.

CONCLUSION

By defining what is most important to you, identifying the impact you want to have, redefining success, and determining how you have done “enough,” you can set personal and professional goals that resonate with your true self, which directly correlates with personal/professional satisfaction and success! If you need support in working through this process, defining your goals, or consistently staying on track, consider reaching out for professional guidance.



**BY: LYLA CORKERN, LPC
OWNER/CEO, FINDING SOLACE**

UPCOMING EVENT:



BLACK MALE SUMMIT 2024

COME & JOIN ELLEVATE AT THE BLACK MALE SUMMIT 2024! THE SUMMIT WILL OFFER A TIME OF REFLECTION & CELEBRATION OF STRIDES TOWARD THE EQUITABLE SUCCESS OF BLACK MALES. THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM IS EXCITED TO OFFER THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GATHER & DISCUSS SOLUTIONS FOR ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS & CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

SCAN TO REGISTER!



Location

Hilton New Orleans
Riverside Hotel
Two Poydras St.
New Orleans, LA 70130



Date

June 17-18, 2024



Time

Monday, June 17th
7:30am - 6:00pm
Tuesday, June 18th
8:30am - 1:30pm



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