



STATE LEGISLATURE

AN INFORMATION,
AND ACTIVITY BOOK

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

CLAY SCHEXNAYDER

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

The Louisiana Legislature

Louisiana's state government looks a lot like our federal government. We have three branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. The Legislative Branch makes laws for the state, the Executive Branch enforces the laws passed by the State Legislature, and the Judicial Branch makes sure these laws don't violate either our state or federal constitutions. We're going to focus on the Legislative Branch.

There are two groups of people that make up Louisiana's Legislature. One is the House of Representatives, the other is the Senate. Since we have two houses, our Legislature is called "bicameral". In the Latin language, "bi" means two, and "cameral" means house. There are 105 state representatives and 39 state senators. They are elected to represent us every four years, called a term.

Every year, the Legislature meets in Baton Rouge, our state capital, to participate in legislative sessions. A session is when they get together to debate each other's ideas down, and we call these documents bills. If a bill gets the okay from both Houses, and the Governor likes it, it becomes a law.

In even-numbered years we have a Regular Session in which all kinds of bills are introduced. In odd-numbered years we have Fiscal Sessions in which bills dealing with money matters may be introduced. Additionally, each member may prefile (file before session begins) not more than 5 bills that are not about money matters. Each member may also prefile an unlimited number of local or special bills (bills that do not affect the entire state) and 5 more fiscal or local bills once session begins.

We also can have Special Sessions. If the Legislature is not in session, and something happens that needs to be discussed by both Houses, the Governor, or the Legislature itself can call a Special Session.



The Governor's Mansion

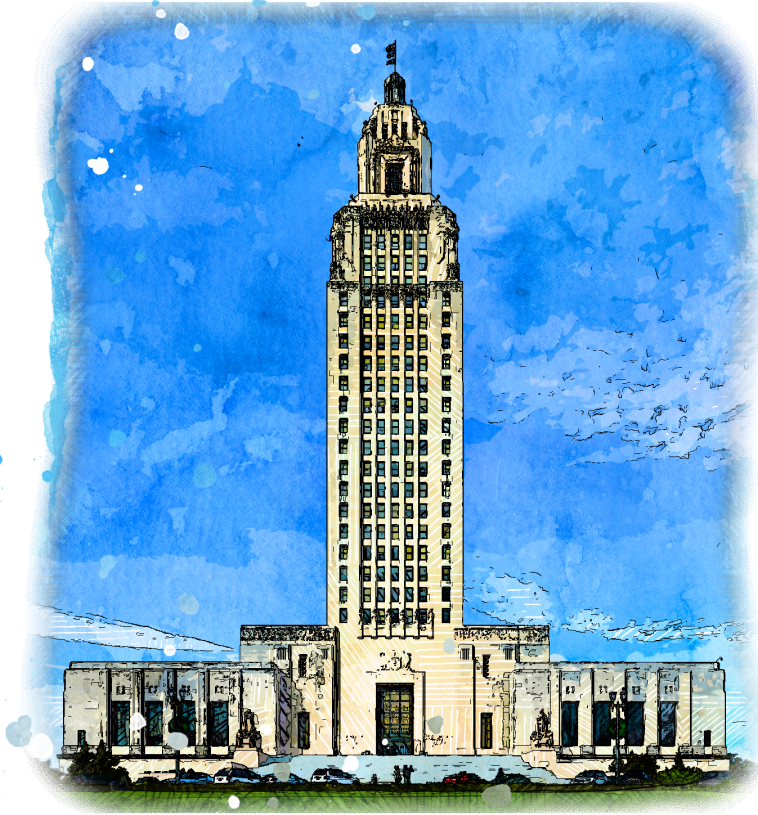


The first Governor's mansion was built before the Civil War, but because of the persistence of Gov. Huey Long it was replaced in 1930. Wanting a new mansion in white to live, Gov. Long asked the Louisiana Legislature to give him the money to fund his project. Instead of letting their refusal keep him down, he took Louisiana prisoners to the old mansion and had them tear it down! The Legislature had to give him the money to build a new one!

In 1960 there was a push to replace the Long Mansion with one that reflected Louisiana's rich architectural heritage. So, using the Oak Alley antebellum plantation home as a model, a new Governor's Mansion was built. Completed in 1963, the current mansion overlooks the Capitol Lake in Baton Rouge.

At 25,000 square feet, the mansion has 3 floors, a basement, 8 bedrooms, and 16 baths – 60 rooms in all! In the center of the Stair Hall floor is the state seal made by artists using 2,500 pieces of inlaid stone. They added a Louisiana touch to the seal, a Magnolia blossom. This flower has special meaning in our state, do you know what it is? If you keep reading, you'll find out!

Louisiana State Capitol



The dream of Governor Huey P. Long, the “new” State Capitol is now a symbol of pride and history for Louisiana. Completed in 1932, it only took 14 months to build. The building itself stands on a 27-acre lot and cost a mere five million dollars to build.

If you get the chance to visit Baton Rouge, this magnificent building is a must see. The tallest capitol in the United States at 450 feet and 34 floors, the front staircase is engraved with the names of the 50 U.S. states in the order they were admitted into the Union.

The inside is just as beautiful, decorated with marble, bronze, murals, and sculptures. To get into both the Senate and House chambers you have to pass through beautiful bronze doors that literally weigh a ton each!

Ironically, Huey Long was assassinated in the Capitol in 1935, just three years after its completion. He is buried on the grounds of the building, and there is a statue of his likeness that faces the front of the Capitol.

Group tours are offered by appointment, and are available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

House of Representatives



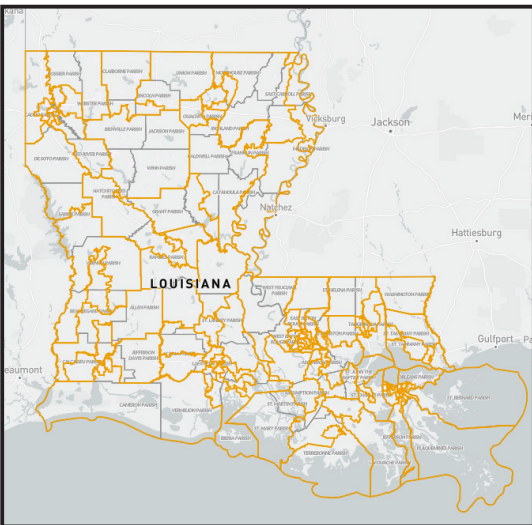
The state is divided by population into 105 areas, called districts. Before someone can go to Baton Rouge as a Representative, he or she has to be elected by the voters living in one of these districts to represent them in the Legislature.

Do you think you'd like to be a state Representative one day? Well, there are a few requirements you'll have to meet before you can try. First, you have to be at least 18 years old and a registered voter. That makes sense because you have to be 18 before you can register to vote anyway! Next, you have to have lived in Louisiana for at least two years. You also have to live in the district you want to represent. Anyone interested?

Here's another bit of trivia for you, all the bills that deal with funding have to start out in the House of Representatives. Senators can't write those kinds of bills.

Now, in each session there are hundreds of bills Representatives have to consider making into laws. It would take forever if they heard every one! Fortunately for them, the House is split up into committees that hear bills first. For example, if a bill is about putting computers into every classroom in our state, then the Education Committee reviews it. If they like the bill, they'll sent it to the entire House to hear. If they don't like it, they just throw it away. This is how most of the bills are "killed".

A bill can go through lots of changes if it's lucky enough to become a law. On average, only a small percentage of bills introduced make it through the whole process and become laws!



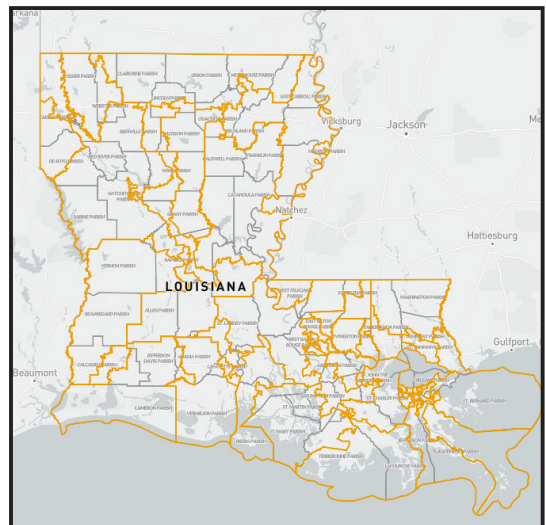
Senate

There are 39 Louisiana State Senators. Each Senator represents a district, a particular area of the state, and is elected by voters in that district. Frequently, Senators are identified by the district they represent. If you read or hear about a Senator representing District 3 or District 35, or any of the 39 districts, you can easily find out which part of the state that Senator represents by finding the district on a Senate District map like the one you see here. For instance, the District 3 Senator represents a portion of New Orleans, while the District 35 Senator represents an area in North Louisiana.

To be elected a Louisiana State Senator, you must meet the same requirements as to be elected to the House of Representatives. As a Senator you will represent more people than a Representative. Each Senator represents about 108,000 people, and each Representative represents about 40,000.

Another difference between the Senate and the House of Representatives is the special authority and responsibility of the Senate to confirm the appointment of persons to important state jobs. Senators review the qualifications and background of each person and in a public vote decide whether or not to approve -confirm- a person to the job.

As in the House, the members of the Senate are assigned to various committees to better discuss the hundreds of bills considered at each session. Each committee debates bills on certain subjects. For instance, the Finance Committee discusses the state budget bill, while the Transportation and Highways Committee discusses the speed limit bill. Committee members must agree to let the full Senate consider the measure. No bill can become law unless both the House and the Senate approve it.





THE ROLE OF A LEGISLATOR

A LEGISLATOR'S JOB

The job of a state legislator is to pass laws. It is the legislature's responsibility to establish general statewide policy, levy taxes, appropriately and otherwise decide how state monies are spent, and establish and review the activities of all governmental agencies and officials.

In addition, they are called upon by you, their constituents, to assist in a variety of ways, including: obtaining aid from public agencies; providing information about state programs, current law and pending legislation; providing assistance at the state capitol; securing projects and programs for House & Senate districts and aiding in solving problems both governmental and personal, including acting as a mediator with a state agency on behalf of a constituent or local governing authority. It is their responsibility to serve.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

In Louisiana, as in Congress and most other states, the lawmaking process involves four major stages: introduction, committee action, floor action, and enrollment. In a bicameral legislature like Louisiana's, with both a house and a senate, the first three stages must occur in each of the chambers consecutively. After the chamber in which the bill is introduced completes action on the measure, the bill is sent to the other chamber, where the process is repeated through the three stages. The fourth stage, enrollment, occurs in the originating chamber after both have agreed on the final form of the proposal.

CONNECT WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

If you have any comments or questions on pending legislation please contact the office of your state legislator. Some of the best pieces of legislation come from constituents, so if you have an idea for a bill you are encouraged to contact their office. Visit www.legis.la.gov for more information.

Name Louisiana's Elected Officials

My Statewide Elected Officials:

Governor: _____

Lieutenant Governor: _____

Secretary of State: _____

Attorney General: _____

State Treasurer: _____

Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner: _____

Insurance Commissioner: _____

My Local Elected Officials

State Representative: _____

State Senator: _____

Louisiana Supreme Court Justice: _____

Mayor: _____

School Board Member: _____

City/Parish Council Member: _____

Louisiana History

In 1803, with the U.S. only 27 years old, U.S. President Thomas Jefferson felt it was in his new country's best interest to gain control of New Orleans because of its port. President Jefferson sent diplomats to France to ask Napoleon if he would sell the city. Napoleon decided to sell the entire Louisiana territory for just \$15 million. The Louisiana Purchase nearly double the size of the United States! Thirteen of our present states came from this territory. In just 41 years the people living in the Louisiana territory belonged to three different countries!

After the Louisiana territory split into smaller pieces, what we now know as Louisiana officially became a state in 1812. It was the 18th state admitted into the Union.

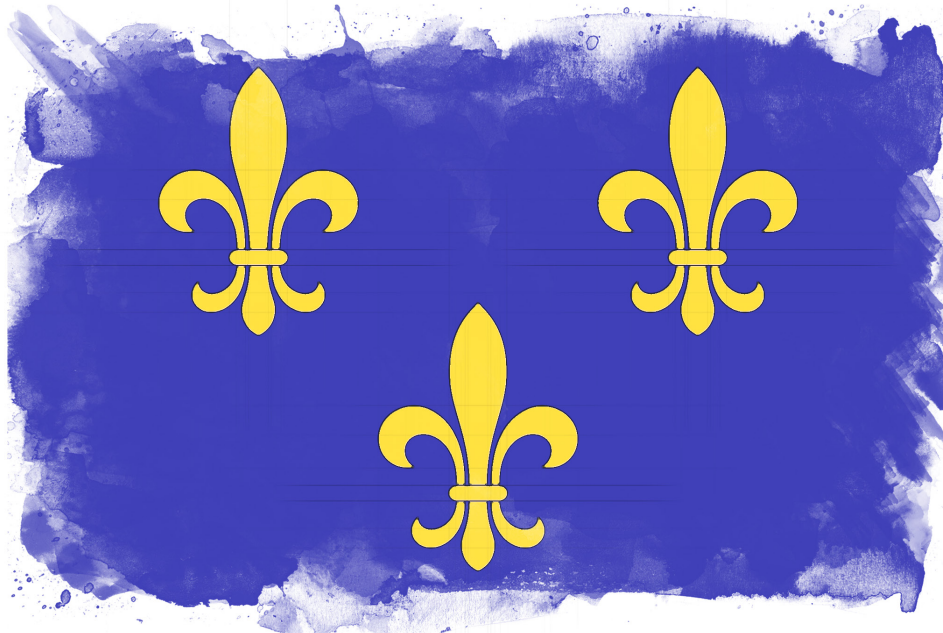
The cultural diversity found in our state is a result of its unique history. Our French heritage is evident in the dialect spoken by many Louisiana natives, our parish system (all other states have counties), and our system of law (we have the Napoleonic code law system while other states have common law). If you take a stroll in New Orleans' French Quarter you'll see some beautiful examples of Spanish architecture!



Bourbon Spain (1769)



Louisiana History



French Fleur-de-Lis
(1682)

Do you know who the first inhabitants of Louisiana were? They weren't French, Spanish, English or American. They were the Native Americans! The earliest known tribes in what is now our state date back to about 3,000 years ago. That was even before the Roman Empire developed! There were over 20 tribes of Indians located in Louisiana.

The first European explorers to our state were Spanish, but since they didn't find any gold or silver they lost interest and left. The French were the first ones to try to settle the rugged lands of Louisiana. French explorer La Salle came down the Mississippi from Canada in 1682 and named the new territory he found Louisiana in honor of France's King Louis XIV.

This new territory changed hands in 1762 because France lost the French and Indian War. The Treaty of Fontainebleau gave Spain control of Louisiana. Nobody told the French settlers living there until 1764! The Spanish didn't have control for very long. In 1800 another treaty gave control of Louisiana back to France.

As confusing as this all was to the people living in Louisiana, it didn't end there.

State Songs

Give Me Louisiana

-Arrangement by John Schaum

-Words and Music by Doralice Fontane

(1st Verse)

Give me Louisiana.

The State where I was born

The State of snowy cotton.

The best I've ever known;

A State of sweet magnolias,

And creole melodies

Oh give me Louisiana.

The State where I was born

Of what sweet memories

The mossy old oaks bring.

It brings us the story of our Evangeline

A State of old tradition,

Makes good old Louisiana

The sweetest of all States.

You Are My Sunshine

-Words and Music by Jimmy H. Davis and Charles Mitchell

(4th verse)

Louisiana my Louisiana

The place where I was born.

White fields of cotton

Green fields of clover,

The best fishing and long tall corn;

Chorus:

You are my sunshine

My only sunshine

You make me happy

When skies are grey

You'll never know dear

How much I love you

Please don't take my sunshine away.

(5th verse)

Crawfish gumbo and jambalaya

The biggest shrimp and sugar cane,

The finest oysters










And sweet strawberries









From Toledo Bend to New Orleans;










(Chorus)

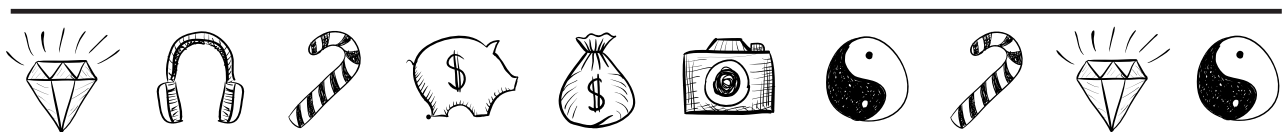
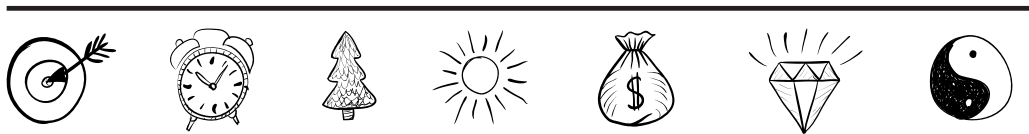


Can You Decode Our State Motto?

								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I

							
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q

								
R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z



Louisiana Legislative Terms Word Scramble

1. LBLI _____
2. WLSA _____
3. TOVE _____
4. CMEOTADR _____
5. SKAEERP _____
6. TCIAOPL _____
7. BCIANURPEL _____
8. SSAEDP _____
9. RSINDPEET _____
10. MTMTECIEO _____
11. ISOSESN _____
12. AENSET _____
13. OLUSNAIAI _____
14. ADEMENMTN _____
15. RNAMHIAC _____
16. AETURLGSIEL _____
17. EUHSO _____

Louisiana Legislative Word Search

From the list below, find and circle the words that are commonly heard in the Louisiana State Legislature. They can be read forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally.



- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Amend | Committee | Laws | Representative |
| Baton Rouge | Constituent | Legislature | Republican |
| Bills | Democrat | Louisiana | Senator |
| Capital | Election | Passed | Session |
| Capitol | House | President | Speaker |
| Chairman | Independent | Public | Veto |
| Chamber | | | Vote |

Louisiana Products

Fill in the blanks with the word that fits the blank spaces and answers the clues listed at the bottom of the page. The blocked letters, read vertically, spell out the answer to the 10th clue.

(HINT: If the word does not fit the amount of blanks for that clue, it is NOT the right answer!)

1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										
8.										
9.										

Clues:

- Made from petroleum
- It's slimy, has 2 shells, and can be eaten raw or cooked
- Louisiana is one of the U.S.'s largest producers of this "sweet" crop
- In the spring we have "boils" and eat these red crustaceans with family and friends
- After falling off the tree, these nuts are used to make Louisiana pralines
- This shellfish can also be boiled, but its pinkish white "meat" sure tastes good fried
- These red berries are the main attraction at a Pontchatoula festival
- Your clothes can be made out of this product's fluffy, white fibers
- A big deal in Ruston, Louisiana, the skin of this fruit can sometimes be "furry"
- The 18th state admitted into the U.S.



CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO COMMITTEE MEETINGS LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

GETTING HERE:

- Directions and a map to the Capitol are on our website www.house.louisiana.gov under "Citizen's Guide."
- You may park in areas without a reserved sign or orange cone.

ENTERING THE CAPITOL:

- Enter the Capitol through the side doors (ground level below the main steps) and proceed through security.
- Please limit items that may set off a metal detector/x-ray machine or call for a detailed bag search (such as extra jewelery and large bags). This will delay your entry into the Capitol.
- No weapons of any kind are allowed inside the Capitol building.

ATTENDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

- House committee meetings are held in Committee Rooms 1-6.
- Rooms 1 & 2 are located on the ground floor in Bigby Hall.
- Rooms 3-6 are located in Alario Hall down a set of steps at the end of Bigby Hall. An elevator is available.
- Senate Committee Rooms A,B,C,E, and F are located on the ground floor in Duval Hall. Access to the John Hainkel Room is down a set of steps at the end of Duval Hall. An elevator is available.
- You may not approach the desk to speak to committee members.
- Please place ALL cell phones and other electronic devices on vibrate mode. You may take phone calls in the hallway only, not in committee rooms.
- Food and drinks are prohibited in committee hallways and committee rooms.

FOR YOUR COMFORT

- Restrooms and vending machines are available near the committee room hallways in the foyer of the ground floor. Water fountains are available near the restrooms, as well as in Bigby Hall and in Duval Hall. Restrooms and water fountains are also available in Alario Hall.

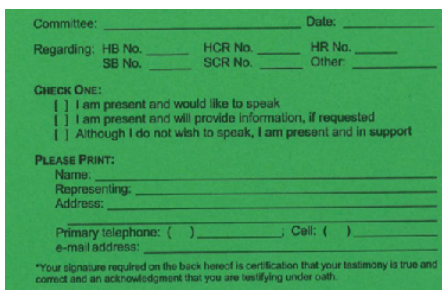
Your Legislators want to know your thoughts. Make sure they do.

The committee hearing is an opportunity to inform legislators of your position regarding pending legislation or just to observe the legislative process. However, the length of the meeting agenda and the number of people who wish to testify may require the imposition of time limitations. If you are with a group, it is advisable to appoint a spokesperson.

To register support or opposition...

You do not have to speak in committee to register your support or opposition to a bill. Please use the witness cards to indicate your position and whether you would like to testify. Green cards indicate support, red cards opposition, and white cards if you wish to provide unbiased information.

Green cards are used to support an item



Committee: _____ Date: _____
Regarding: HB No. _____ HCR No. _____ HR No. _____
SB No. _____ SCR No. _____ Other: _____

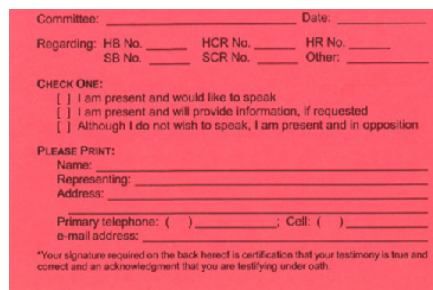
CHECK ONE:
 I am present and would like to speak
 I am present and will provide information, if requested
 Although I do not wish to speak, I am present and in support

PLEASE PRINT:
Name: _____
Representing: _____
Address: _____
Primary telephone: () _____; Cell: () _____
e-mail address: _____

*Your signature required on the back hereof is certification that your testimony is true and correct and an acknowledgment that you are testifying under oath.



Red cards are used to oppose an item



Committee: _____ Date: _____
Regarding: HB No. _____ HCR No. _____ HR No. _____
SB No. _____ SCR No. _____ Other: _____

CHECK ONE:
 I am present and would like to speak
 I am present and will provide information, if requested
 Although I do not wish to speak, I am present and in opposition

PLEASE PRINT:
Name: _____
Representing: _____
Address: _____
Primary telephone: () _____; Cell: () _____
e-mail address: _____

*Your signature required on the back hereof is certification that your testimony is true and correct and an acknowledgment that you are testifying under oath.

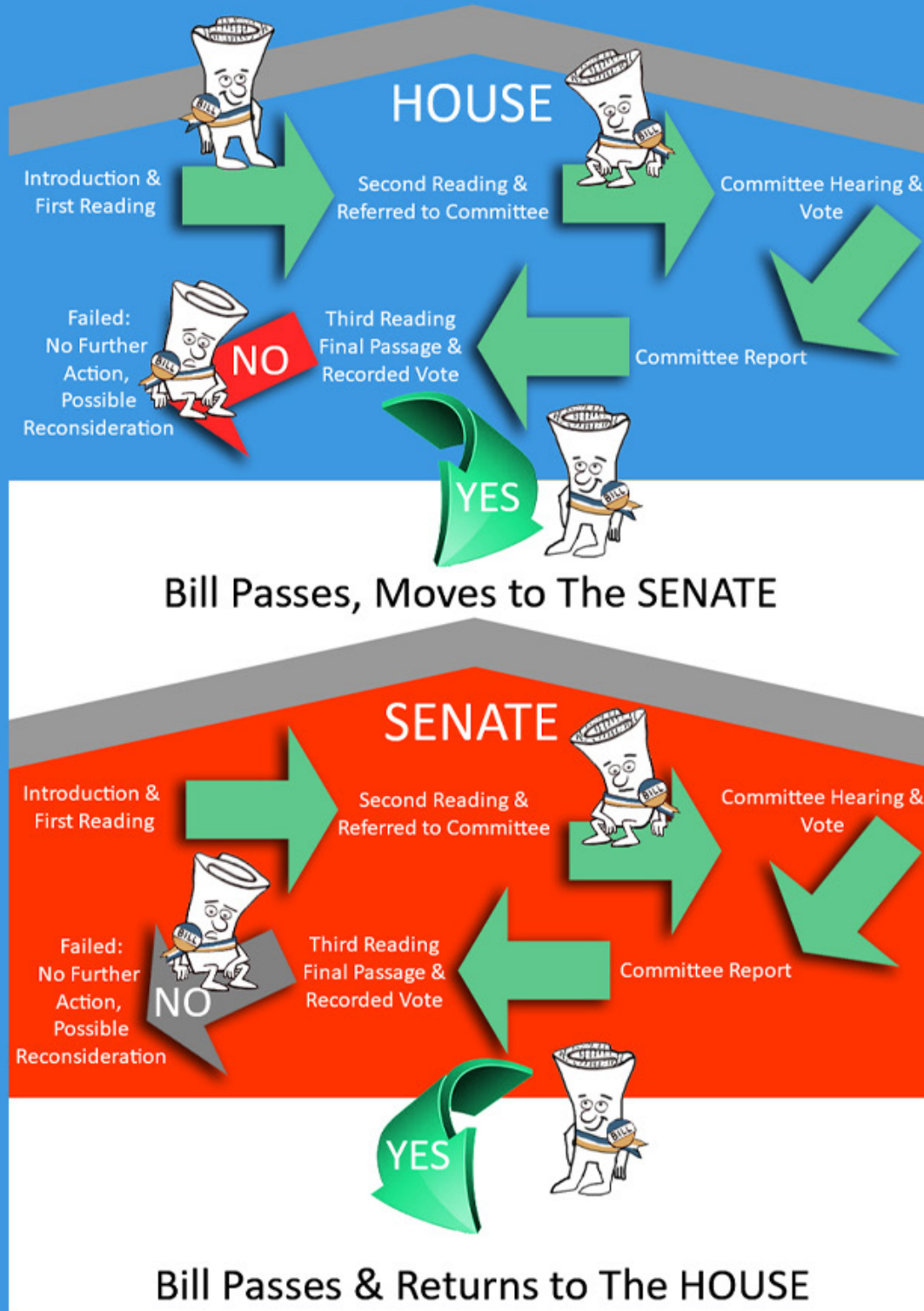


These Witness Cards are available in the committee room and overflow rooms on the witness tables. Carefully read, fill out, and sign the back of the witness card. Your signature is an oath that you will tell the truth. **If you wish to speak, please check the appropriate box on the card.** Please return completed cards to the designated staff member or sergeant-at-arms.

Important Note: You must fill out a separate card for each bill you are supporting or opposing.

Your oral and written comments and positions stated on the cards are important and become part of the permanent public record. Thank you for your opinion.

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW Louisiana



HOUSE

Did Bill Pass The SENATE without Amendments



Enrolled & Sent to The Governor



Does HOUSE accept changes in Amended Bill

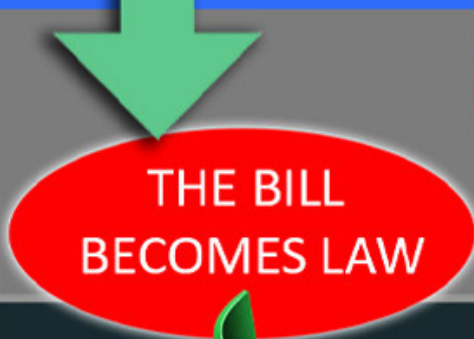


Conference Committee House and Senate Members attempt to iron out their differences over the bill.



Report of Conference Committee sent to House and Senate.

Do both House and Senate accept Conference Committee Report?



Bill Fails at least one body rejects report agreement not achieved



Governor Signs Bill & Becomes an Act

OR

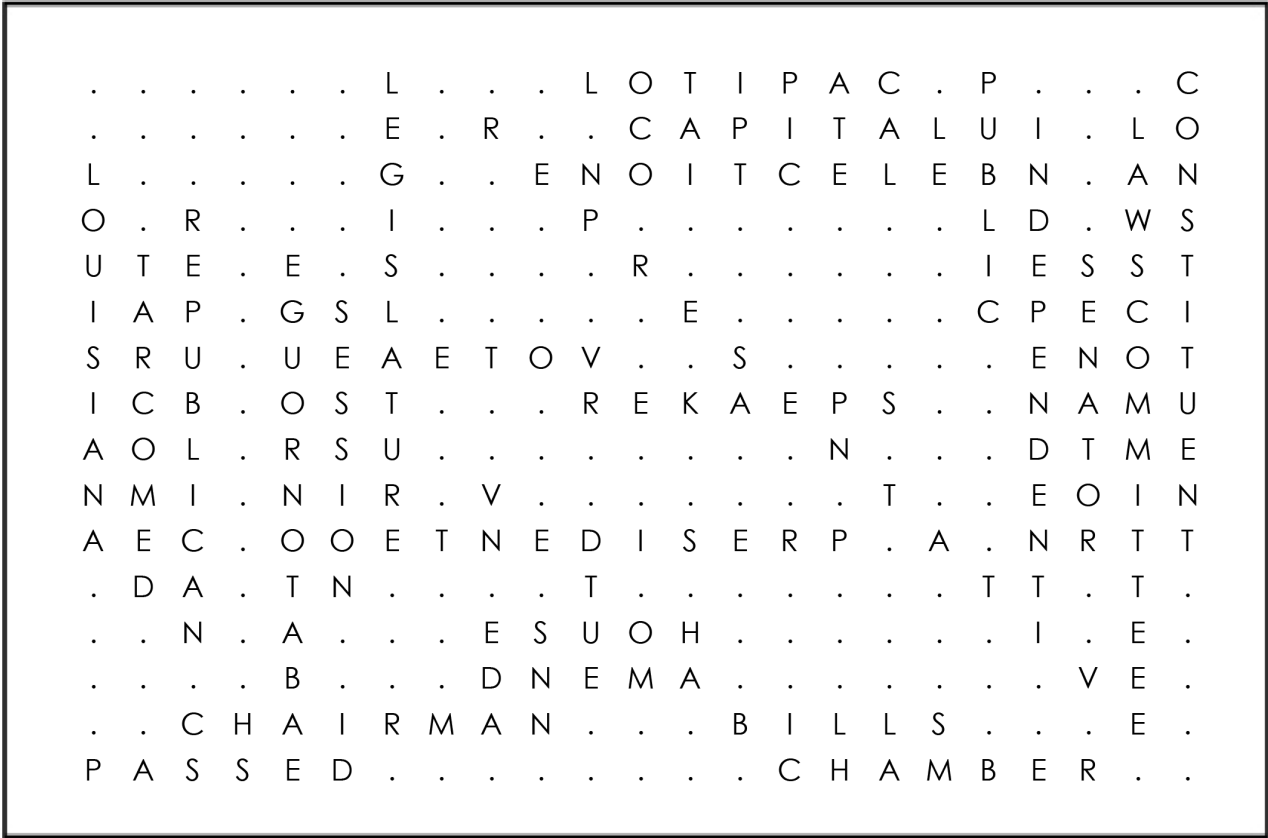
Governor fails to sign within constitutionally prescribed time period. Bill becomes an Act

OR

Governor vetoes bill and two-thirds of House and Senate vote to override veto in favor of bill. Bill becomes an Act



Answer Key



1. O I L
2. O Y S T E R
3. S U G A R C A N E
4. C R A W F I S H
5. P E C A N S
6. S H R I M P
7. S T R A W B E R R I E S
8. C O T T O N
9. P E A C H

Answer Key

1. LBLI B I L L
2. WLSA L A W S
3. TOVE V O T E
4. CMEOTADR D E M O C R A T
5. SKAEERP S P E A K E R
6. TCIAOPL C A P I T O L
7. BCIANURPEL R E P U B L I C A N
8. SSAEDP P A S S E D
9. RSINDPEET P R E S I D E N T
10. MTMTECIEO C O M M I T T E E
11. ISOSESN S E S S I O N
12. AENSET S E N A T E
13. OLUSNAIAI L O U I S I A N A
14. ADEMENMTN A M E N D M E N T
15. RNAMHIAC C H A I R M A N
16. AETURLGSIEL L E G I S L A T U R E
17. EUHSO H O U S E



LEGISLATIVE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

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