



LABI

**PROGRAM
OF WORK
2025**

ABOUT LABI

LABI serves its diverse membership with a singular focus: fostering economic growth by championing the principles of free enterprise. As the leading voice for Louisiana's business community, LABI sets the standard for advocacy, equipping policymakers with the insight and data needed to drive sound public policy and sustainable economic progress.

LABI is proud to be Louisiana's official state chapter for both the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.



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YOUR VOICE AT THE CAPITOL

Founded in 1975, LABI is the state's leading voice for the business community. LABI serves as the premiere catalyst for economic transformation in Louisiana by uniting business leaders, policymakers and communities around a bold, actionable vision to elevate the state's economic competitiveness, enhance workforce readiness and improve quality of life.

Our strength lies in our members. Representing more than 2,000 Louisiana employers, LABI is the only statewide, multi-industry association that speaks for businesses of all sizes across the political, legislative, judicial, and regulatory arenas.




PRINCIPAL GOAL

LABI's LA Driven strategic plan will continue to guide advocacy efforts and policy priorities during 2025. The upcoming fiscal Legislative Session presents an opportunity for historic tax reform that will finally provide both job creators and individuals with a fair, predictable and simple tax structure that will allow Louisiana to compete with our southern neighbors. Specific to the upcoming Legislative fiscal session, LABI will advocate for pro-growth policies that will incentivize investment and tackle long-standing burdens that have placed Louisiana at a competitive disadvantage for decades.

The 2025 Program of Work identifies the key issues impacting Louisiana's economy and employers statewide. Serving as a roadmap for advocacy, this annual plan directs LABI's efforts to advance policies that promote economic growth and a thriving business environment.

Specifically, LABI will urge the Governor and lawmakers to:

- Create a modern, fair and stable tax system and economic development structure that encourages investment and job growth;
- Enact measures that aim to attract more insurers to the market and lower insurance-related costs by promoting transparency and fairness in Louisiana's legal system;
- Enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency across state government relative to operations and project delivery, specifically in the Department of Transportation & Development (DOTD) to create a safe and sustainable transportation system for a modern economy;



The 2025 Legislative Session will convene at noon on Monday, April 14, 2025.
Final adjournment will be no later than 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 12, 2025.

- Prioritize workforce development solutions that prepare Louisianans for high-wage, high-demand jobs to keep our best and brightest home while improving Louisiana’s attractiveness as a destination for job creators and families;
- Support business, policy, community leaders and stakeholders in promoting access to high-quality early childhood education to ensure families have the resources they need to participate in the workforce.



COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

LABI is pleased to have an excellent team of experienced policy experts who work diligently to advance our mission of providing a voice on behalf of the business community of Louisiana. Please contact them if you have any specific questions about the 2025 Program of Work.



CIVIL JUSTICE REFORM

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CIVIL JUSTICE REFORM



Louisiana's liability exposure is a major concern to individuals, government, professionals and businesses, both large and small. We know for Louisiana's economy to improve, it is necessary that its civil justice system improves. We will defend the meaningful reforms made in 2020 and 2024 and continue to fight to further improve Louisiana's judicial system.

STATE

MAJOR ISSUES

GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED LITIGATION

LABI Position: Oppose efforts by governmental entities to use litigation to harass businesses when engaged in lawful activities. Support legislation that curbs lawsuits by governmental entities, independently or with others, particularly entrepreneurial outside counsel, which exploit laws to punish businesses acting lawfully.

JUDICIAL TRANSPARENCY

LABI Position: Support transparency, ethics and efficiency in the budgeting and operations of Louisiana's courts. The principle of judicial independence as a separate branch of government is an important and historic American tenet, but independence, fiscal responsibility, and accountability can be promoted simultaneously. We should expect the same level of accountability and transparency within the judicial branch as we do from the executive and legislative arms of state government.

JUDICIAL REFORM

LABI Position: Support programs and legislation to foster judicial excellence, including, but not limited to, consolidating districts and court functions, modernizing our judgeships to reflect the current needs of the state and its population, including the creation of competent specialized courts, as well as creating a centralized electronic filing system for court documents.

MEDICAL BILLING TRANSPARENCY

LABI Position: Support legislation which limits the recovery of medical expenses to the amount actually paid or to be paid, including, but not limited to legislation directing that courts be presented with evidence demonstrating the total amount of medical bills that are actually paid or owed by the claimant, rather than only the amount billed and/or charged, neither of which bear any semblance to the amount the health provider intends to recover or the plaintiff has any obligation to pay.

CURRENT ISSUES

Abrogation of Contracts: Oppose legislation permitting the abrogation of existing contracts.

Appeal Bond Caps: Support legislation setting reasonable limits on suspensive appeal bonds.

Asbestos Bankruptcy Transparency: Support legislation that would require plaintiffs to file with and disclose recovery from asbestos bankruptcy trusts to prevent double recoveries for the same injury and protect defendants' rights.

Bifurcation of Trials: Support legislation to eliminate the requirement that all parties to a civil suit consent to the separate determination of liability and damages.

Civil Justice Reform: Support legislation to improve the fairness and predictability of the civil justice system in Louisiana. Defend the reforms previously enacted to improve Louisiana laws with emphasis on Louisiana's policy against awarding punitive damages unless authorized by statute, joint and several liability, as well as other reforms, including, but not limited to the limitations placed on products liability and strict liability actions, and the availability of motions for summary judgment. Reforms in the '90s were based on the premise that those at fault should only be held responsible for the harm they caused. Additionally, the retroactive application of liability against Louisiana entities and individuals is unacceptable, and directly contravenes the Louisiana Civil Code.

Contingency Fee: Oppose legislation that would authorize state, local governments and/or political subdivisions to enter into contingency fee contracts or to employ outside counsel to be paid by the defendants or the state (from the proceeds of awards and/or settlements). Support additional legislative oversight.

COVID-19 Liability Protection: Defend the 2020 legislation enacted to prevent liability exposure due to the pandemic.

Deceptive Drug Lawsuit Advertisements: Support legislation to help bring an end to misleading lawsuit advertisements run by plaintiffs' lawyers, non-attorney advertising firms seeking potential plaintiffs for lawsuits, and aggregators, i.e., businesses that recruit potential plaintiffs and thereafter sell their information to law firms. These ads undermine the simple notion that physicians and health care providers, not personal injury lawyers or the aggregators who run the ads for the lawyers, should dispense medical advice.

Direct Action: Defend Act 275 from the 2024 regular session repealing Louisiana's unique direct-action statute, which previously allowed a plaintiff to sue an insurer for coverage directly. Defend the 2024 legislation which now limits utilization of a direct action against an insurer to the enumerated set of exceptional circumstances set forth in the statute and support the continued prohibition of evidence regarding the presence of liability insurance to a jury.

Disclosure of Litigation Financing Arrangements: Defend Act 765 of the 2024 legislative session that now requires plaintiffs to disclose the existence of any contractual arrangements with third-party financing companies during the course of discovery. This legislation helps ensure transparency and temper the trend of utilizing third-party financing companies to float a plaintiff's medical and/or litigation-related expenses. Support additional legislation that would require disclosure of such arrangements at the outset of litigation or upon entering into a funding agreement to ensure all parties and courts have access to this vital information.

Discovery: Support legislation limiting "fishing expeditions" for extraneous information in lawsuits and to ensure protections against abusive discovery, including electronic discovery.

Double Recovery: Support legislation to eliminate double recovery of damages and defend 2020 reforms that brought down the excess cost of recoverable medical expenses, as well as support further efforts to limit the recovery of medical expenses to the amount actually paid or to be paid. Support transparency legislation which directs that only medical bills that are actually paid or owed by the claimant are communicated and presented to the jury, such that phantom medical expenses or exorbitant charges that are not reasonable and necessary are excluded from evidence.

Insurance-Related Reform: Support legislation that seeks to control insurance-related costs while providing market incentives for more insurers to stay in or come to Louisiana, including, but not limited to defending the 2024 reforms made to Louisiana's "bad faith" laws governing the good faith and fair dealing requirements for insurance companies; continue defending the measures taken in the 2024 legislative session to reduce inflated property damage claims; and reduce the insurance tax burden to a level consistent with other states in the South.

Judicial Activism: Support legislation that will prohibit the judicial creation and/or recognition of a new cause of action for damages. Oppose legislation creating new causes of action in Louisiana.

Jury Trial Threshold: Defend a citizen's right to a civil jury trial by protecting the 2020 reform lowering the monetary threshold of \$10,000 and support the requirement that all elements of an award, including attorney fees, penalties, costs and interest, be included in the existing, or any lower, judicial threshold.

Lawsuit Lending: Support legislation that would provide for reasonable consumer protections in consumer lawsuit loan transactions and/or living expense loans, including a limit on the maximum loan finance charges allowed in consumer lawsuit loan transactions, and a maximum loan amount that may be provided by an attorney to their client for living expenses throughout the course of ongoing litigation. Oppose any legislation or other actions which would weaken such consumer protections.

Legacy Lawsuit Reform: Support legislation that regulates appropriate damages in lawsuits related to oil field remediation.

Multi-Party Litigation Reform: Support appropriate class action, mass joinder and multi-district litigation legislation.

Offer of Judgment: Support legislation to encourage settlements within a reasonable range and to discourage plaintiffs from overvaluing their cases. Because of the wording of the Code of Civil Procedure article that deals with this subject, if the plaintiff does not win a "judgment" (in other words if the defendant wins) then the offer of judgment is not applicable. This language should be changed so that if the defendant is granted a favorable judgment after the offer of judgment is rejected, the defendant is entitled to costs and attorney's fees.

Piercing the Corporate Veil: Support legislation that prohibits the application of the single business enterprise theory to extend liability beyond a separate entity.

Prescription: Oppose efforts to lengthen the time frame in which lawsuits can be filed. Support legislation to re-establish, expand and strengthen prescription and other traditional defenses.

Product Liability: Support legislation that affords reasonable protection to manufacturers and sellers of legal products. Ensure that manufacturers are not unfairly exposed to liability for products they neither made nor sold.

Professional Liability: Support legislation to reform professional liability. Support health care provider and insurer efforts to refine and improve the medical professional liability system, while opposing judicial attempts and unilateral legislative attempts to remove or raise the medical malpractice cap.

Property and Casualty Insurance: Support measures that improve the availability and affordability of private insurance in a competitive market, revise the onerous and ambiguous laws that make it impossible for policyholders to resolve a claim with their insurer without resorting to litigation, and oppose measures that hinder the stability of the private insurance industry. Oppose any erosion to positive laws that have been enacted, and support measures that further clarify the rights and duties of both policyholders and insurers to encourage a stable and healthy private insurance market.

Subsequent Purchaser: Oppose legislation which would create a right of action to assert claims for environmental damages that were caused or sustained prior to acquisition by an owner of the property.

Substance Exposure Liability: Support appropriate legislation that ensures that liability based on exposure to allegedly injurious or hazardous substances including, but not limited to, asbestos, mold and silica, is supported by reliable scientific evidence, and that monetary awards for exposure compensate only to the extent of injuries actually sustained. Support appropriate legislation that would establish medical criteria that separate the sick from those who are not and compensate only those who are sick. This legislation would guarantee those who are healthy have their day in court if, and

when, they become ill. Support legislation to require a plaintiff to provide information substantiating the claim against a specific defendant at the time of pleading.

Venue: Support legislation that sets forth appropriate venue rules in lawsuits, including class action, multi-party, multi-district, and toxic tort cases.

ONGOING POLICY

Contractual Transfer of Tort Liability: Educate LABI members about liability issues and insurance coverage problems associated with contractual transfer of tort liability. Study possible solutions to problems created by contractual transfer of tort liability.

Expert Testimony: Work with appropriate branches of government to resolve problems arising from the admissibility of certain opinion testimony by witnesses presented as experts, and support legislative efforts that require disclosure to the parties and fact finder of the medical experts' historical rate of medical procedures recommended versus medical procedures actually performed. Support legislation that permits the utilization of medical billing experts to evaluate, substantiate, or refute the reasonableness of medical bills pursued alongside litigation.

Interpretation of Laws: Support efforts to clarify the standard of review of interpretive laws which seek to clarify legislative intent to preserve the separation of powers and support efforts to interpret existing laws consistent with the legislative intent.

Liability Insurance: Support legislation to reduce liability costs.

Personal Responsibility: Support legislation to encourage the use of safety devices by allowing introduction of evidence of their non-use/misuse to establish comparative fault.

Pre-judgment Interest: Support efforts to reform pre-judgment interest, particularly on future damage awards.

Tort Defense: Oppose legislation expanding exposure of individuals, professionals and businesses to new causes of action or unreasonable or excessive judicial awards. Support a reasonable cap on general damages awards.

FEDERAL

CURRENT ISSUES

Abrogation of Contracts: Oppose legislation or rulemaking efforts permitting abrogation of existing contracts or an entities' ability to enter into such contractual agreements.

Asbestos Bankruptcy Transparency: Support legislation that would require plaintiffs to file with and disclose recovery from asbestos bankruptcy trusts to prevent double recoveries for the same injury and protect defendants' rights.

Class Action Lawsuits: Support federal class action reform. Oppose efforts to weaken existing reforms.

Catastrophe Response: Support legislation to address regionally or nationally appropriate responses to catastrophes.

Disaster Insurance: Support the Policyholders Disaster Protection Act, which would allow insurance companies to set aside pre-tax dollars in a disaster reserve account.

Disclosure of Litigation Financing Arrangements: Support legislation that requires plaintiffs to disclose contractual arrangements with third-party financing companies in an effort to ensure transparency and temper the trend in utilizing third-party financing companies to float a plaintiff's medical and/or litigation-related expenses.

Expansion of Liability: Oppose legislation, federal rules, regulations and executive orders expanding liability.

Federal Lawsuits: Support efforts by Congress to address frivolous lawsuits.

Filing of Lawsuits: Oppose efforts to lengthen the statute of limitations for the filing of lawsuits. Support legislation to re-establish, expand and strengthen limitations on actions.

Government-Sponsored Lawsuits: Support efforts to stem the tide of government-sponsored litigation.

Pleadings Requirements: Support efforts requiring plaintiffs to streamline their original pleadings in order to narrow lawsuit issues and facilitate early dismissal of improper lawsuits.

Substance Exposure Liability: Support appropriate legislation that would establish medical criteria that separate the sick from those who are not and compensate only those who are sick. This legislation would guarantee those who are healthy have their day in court if, and when, they become ill. Support appropriate legislation that ensures that liability based on exposure to allegedly injurious or hazardous substances including, but not limited to, asbestos, mold and silica, is supported by reliable scientific evidence, and that monetary awards for exposure compensate only to the extent of injuries actually sustained.

Telephone Consumer Protection Act: Support efforts to ensure a limited definition of facsimile machine to its original and traditional definition.

Tort Defense: Oppose legislation that expands exposure of individuals, professionals and businesses to new causes of action or unreasonable or excessive judicial awards.

Tort Offense: Support appropriate tort legislation that would protect domestic entities from unreasonable or excessive judicial awards and extend jurisdiction to foreign entities that cause harm.

CONTACT

Shelby Dunbar serves as Director of the Civil Justice Reform Council. In this capacity, she handles liability and tort reform issues, as well as property and casualty insurance-related matters.

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EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



For decades, LABI has fought to ensure students have access to a high-quality education that produces the skills needed to thrive in the workforce. LABI has consistently advocated for students, parents, taxpayers, and employers alike and will continue to champion an education system that prepares students for high-wage, high-demand jobs and invests in life-long learners. While Louisiana has made real progress, much work remains. LABI will continue to emphasize educational excellence as essential for improving the attractiveness of Louisiana as a destination for families, and to prepare the state's future workforce.

STATE

MAJOR ISSUES

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

LABI Position: Support the transformation of Louisiana’s workforce development system to encourage partnerships across early childhood education programs, K-12 schools, universities, community and technical colleges and employers to create and fill high-demand, high-wage jobs. Encourage the coordinated and streamlined utilization of public funds and programs—federal, state and local—toward data-driven workforce development goals. Overall, the voice and perspective of Louisiana employers must be included in all efforts from top-to-bottom in workforce development.

TALENT SUPPLY & DEVELOPMENT

LABI Position: Support the implementation of Act 330 of the 2024 regular session to unify and strategically align workforce development programs and funding under the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), which serves as the primary point of contact responsible for directing and efficiently delivering workforce solutions for the Louisiana economy. Encourage the continued collaboration among state and local agencies, educational institutions, and employers to establish a talent supply chain that properly serves the needs of Louisiana employers. Support the creation of a cabinet-level office to oversee and coordinate workforce development programs and their funding streams across state agencies in order to achieve strategic alignment between state and local efforts to establish a talent supply chain that properly serves Louisiana employer needs.

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

LABI Position: Support legislation and policies to expand and improve the delivery of skills training in partnership with Louisiana employers, community colleges and K-12 schools. LABI supports improvements to the JumpStart program to incentivize training and certification for students in fields with high-demand, high-wage jobs. the total amount of medical bills that are actually paid or

POST-SECONDARY ALIGNMENT

LABI Position: LABI will encourage the continued development of a post-secondary education system (adult education, technical colleges, community colleges and university systems) that will be efficiently coordinated to provide shared resources and facilities, non-duplicated offerings and articulation agreements. This system should be tailored to each region of the state to offer the proper mix of special workforce training programs, vocational and technical training, industry-based certifications, two-year associate degrees and advanced degrees, and to provide a rapid response to changes in business. Development and direction of these systems should include input from the business community and include metrics designed to measure the progress of each educational component, holding accountable those responsible for the success of their students. LABI encourages the state to adopt and fully implement higher admission standards for four-year universities, discontinue low-enrollment or duplicative programs, continue significant investment in the MJ Foster Promise Program and improve articulation and transfer agreements from two-year to four-year schools.

HIGH STANDARDS

LABI Position: Support high standards and rigorous curriculum in mathematics, science, and English Language Arts (“ELA”). Support “Mastery” as the minimum student proficiency level in assessments (as opposed to the current “Basic”), which would put Louisiana students on par with students in other states for comparative purposes. Support policies ensuring every student is at or above grade level in reading and math upon completion of third grade. Oppose “hold harmless” policies, curving of school letter grades, or other attempts to artificially inflate performance statistics.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

LABI Position: Support increased access to high-quality childcare and early childhood learning from birth to age four to ensure all children in Louisiana enter kindergarten ready to learn and families have the support they need to participate in the workforce. Support efforts to ensure quality, affordable childcare availability in every community, including expanded access to licensed home-based family childcare and tax incentives for employer-sponsored childcare. Support efforts to provide the early childhood community with a voice at the governance table. LABI will continue to advocate for students, parents, taxpayers and employers to connect a more skilled workforce with high-wage, high-demand jobs in a 21st century economy and will support high-quality daycare and early childhood learning.

CURRENT ISSUES

8(g): Support the integrity of the 8(g) fund and oppose any attempts to use those funds to supplant general fund revenues for education.

Adult Education: Support legislation and policy to reorganize and improve the high school equivalency diploma, to provide “soft skills” or “employability” training. Support initiatives to bring adult learners back into the workforce, including rational and effective re-entry programs and policies for ex-offenders. Support increased investment in education programs in state and local prisons, as well as efforts to connect ex-offenders with hiring employers upon release. Support efforts to offer targeted reskilling and upskilling training to workers who have been out of the workforce or need upgraded skills to meet workforce demands.

Charter Schools: Support the expansion of high-quality charter schools.

Classroom Funding: Re-examine the state’s school finance funding formula, the MFP, to determine how to get more money into the classroom, ensure that tax dollars follow the student, and determine the actual cost of delivering quality educational services.

Conflicts of Interest: Support legislation that would prohibit employees of local school systems from serving on BESE.

Education Flexibility: Support flexibility in education delivery models and learning modalities. In today’s fluid environment, it is important to acknowledge the need for educational flexibility in order to best meet a child’s learning needs inside and outside the classroom.

Freedom to Work: Over time, a number of state entities have created artificial barriers to work in the form of occupational licensing. Unless a license is necessary for public health and safety, individuals should be “free to work.” LABI supports efforts to review occupational licensing and remove costly and time-consuming barriers when possible.

High School Dropouts: Support efforts to reduce Louisiana’s public school dropout rate and draw recent dropouts back into school or training.

High School Redesign: Support efforts to ensure all high school students demonstrate true college or career readiness through completion of extensive college-level courses, earning an associate degree, or earning an industry-valued credential before graduation.

Local School Board Reform: Act 1 of the 2012 legislative session included local school board reforms, namely prohibiting school board members from making personnel decisions. Support additional legislation and policy that would encourage the focus of local school boards to be on improving failing schools and raising student academic achievement. Examine bureaucratic impediments to reform at the local school board level and support legislation that would require local school boards to be more accountable for the academic achievement of the students in their districts.

Paycheck Protection: Support legislation to reform or eliminate taxpayer-funded bodies (such as local school districts) from collecting membership dues or other monies for organizations that engage in political activities (such as teacher unions) through automatic payroll deduction.

Post-Secondary Funding: Support tuition and fee autonomy. Implement performance-based funding in the state formula for higher education. Seek to maximize federal funding to creatively support students to complete their degrees and credentials.

Post-Secondary Governance: Support the creation of a single board for post-secondary education to manage and oversee the state's four-year post-secondary education institutions as well as separate LCTCS board to govern the state's community and technical college system, recognizing the unique mission of two-year institutions and their significant role in workforce development. Support recommendations to better define the role, scope and mission of each higher education institution, restructure governance to maximize efficiency, and reorganize campuses to support their missions and align them to regional economic development priorities where relevant.

Regional workforce needs, geographical proximity, enrollment, graduation rates, students' performance on professional examinations, job placement and retention, duplication of programs and accreditation difficulties are starting points for consideration. Shared facilities, faculty, administrative systems and services, and supplies for technical training (secondary, technical college and four-year universities) should be part of the effort to consolidate and improve efficiency.

Post-Secondary Reform: LABI recognizes the economic imperative to improve retention rates on college campuses and graduate many more students every year in both two and four-year institutions. LABI supports removing barriers to smooth the path for adults to re-enter college as well as campus-level innovations such as mentoring, mapping and stacking credentials, decreasing the time-to-degree, putting textbooks online, and reforming remedial coursework. LABI supports efforts to ensure students can access the training they need for high-quality jobs in their communities.

Public School K-12 Accountability System: Following the passage of a strong, work-based learning K-12 accountability formula in 2024, collaboration and engagement between businesses and with local school systems on internship and/or apprenticeship opportunities for Louisiana students is key to ensuring all high school students are prepared for the workforce or post-secondary education. Support the implementation of the new, work-based learning K-12 accountability program. Oppose efforts to eliminate or suspend accountability components such as a rigorous curriculum, statewide testing, or the assignment of letter grades to schools.

School Choice: Support a strong education savings account program implemented by the Louisiana Department of Education and BESE, following the passage of the Louisiana GATOR Scholarship Program in the 2024 regular session. Support other avenues to expand school choice for students including tax credits or deductions for tuition to attend nonpublic schools.

School Leadership: Support efforts to identify and recruit outstanding individuals with records of success into school leadership positions, especially principals and superintendents. Support alternative certification paths for principals that allow and encourage professionals and leaders in fields outside of education to consider becoming principals.

School-to-Work Transition: Support programs in high school that offer dual enrollment, college credit, industry-based certifications, and skills training, including work-based learning opportunities to empower students to succeed in the workforce upon graduation. Support increased access to postsecondary advisors and career-exploration to support students in finding their path. Advocate for initiatives focused on career awareness, workplace exposure and real work experience for young people, including internships, apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeships.

School Safety: LABI acknowledges the direct link between students' mental and behavioral wellness and positive student achievement and supports the early identification of and mental health supports for students in distress, detection of emerging threats, and promotion of a supportive school climate in reducing the prevalence of school violence. LABI will promote efforts to identify and prioritize resources available to improve the safety of Louisiana schools, including the fortification of school building infrastructure, and increased access to comprehensive school-based mental health services.

Teacher Quality: Support efforts to improve teacher quality, including policy changes to improve teacher preparation, in Louisiana. The classroom teacher is the single most important factor in and influence on students' educational success, and LABI will work to strengthen the state's professional teaching corps.

Teacher Recruitment & Retention: Advocate for policies that address the teacher workforce shortage. Support efforts to offer a competitive salary—including dynamic compensation schedules to reward and retain highly-effective educators and incentivize educators to work in high-need subject areas, high-need areas of the state, and low-performing schools. Support legislation that incentivizes districts to offer maternity leave for educators. Strengthen efforts to reduce barriers to entry into the profession while maintaining teacher quality.

Teacher Tenure: Support legislation to repeal tenure for new teachers. Oppose legislation that would expand tenure, sabbatical and extended leave benefits for all school employees, including post-secondary institutions. Oppose any legislation that would repeal or damage Act 1 of 2012.

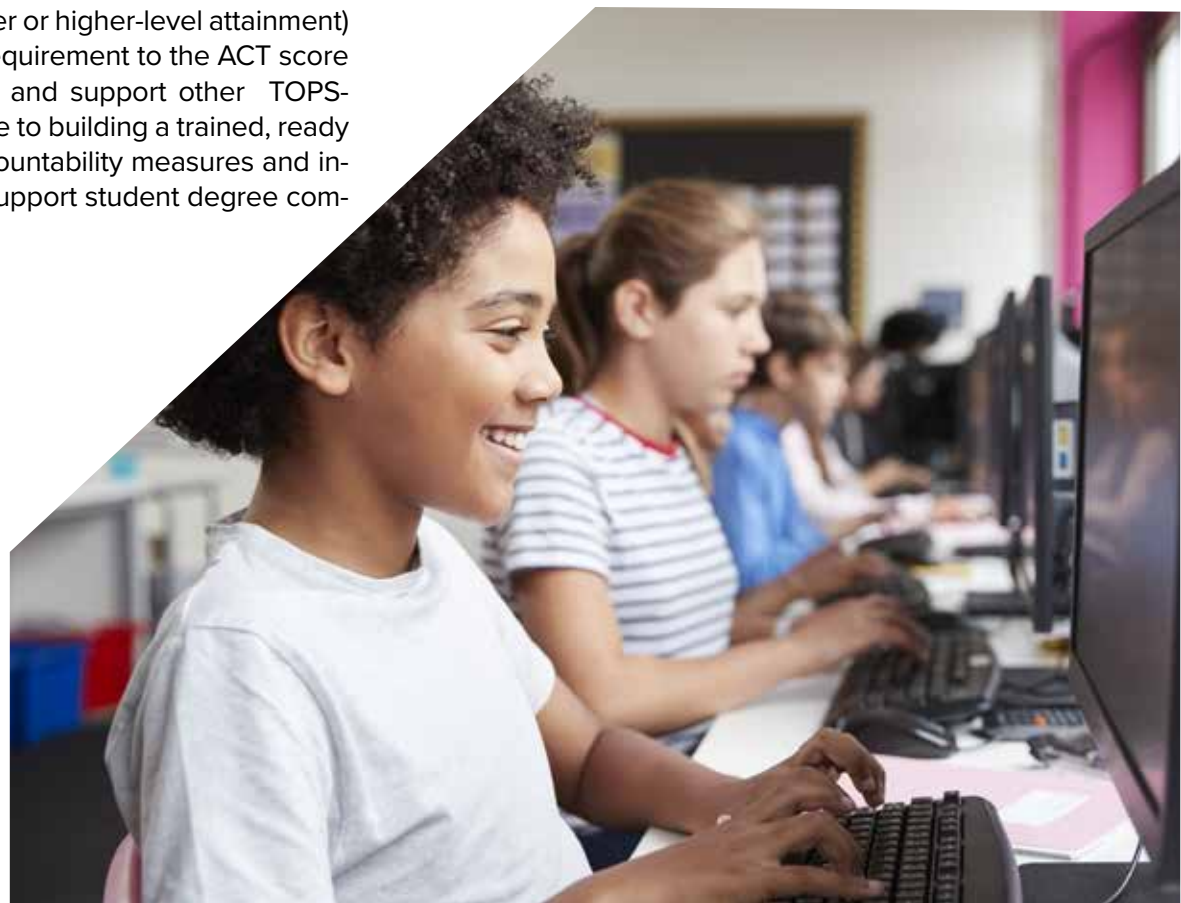
TOPS: Support efforts to redesign the merit-based Tuition Opportunity Program for Students scholarship with a dynamic funding model, placing greater value on students pursuing education for jobs in high-demand industries. Maximize TOPS' return on investment by supporting efforts to allocate funding in alignment with state workforce needs and consideration of financial need. Support efforts to strengthen the academic requirements to receive the TOPS scholarship and oppose efforts to weaken current requirements. Protect the substitution of ACT WorkKeys assessments (silver or higher-level attainment) as an alternative eligibility requirement to the ACT score for TOPS-Tech scholarships and support other TOPS-Tech revisions that contribute to building a trained, ready workforce Advocate for accountability measures and incentives for universities to support student degree completions.

CURRENT ISSUES

Collective Bargaining: Oppose legislation mandating collective bargaining and/or binding arbitration by any public body.

Parent/Teacher/Citizen Empowerment: Support efforts to provide parents, citizens and educators with factual information about education issues at all levels and teach them how to get involved and make the education system work for them and their children.

School Discipline: Support efforts to address the issue of school discipline and work to identify solutions to classroom management problems to while keeping disruptive students in learning environments. Support efforts to create effective alternative schools for students who do not perform well in traditional school settings.



CONTACT

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EMPLOYEE RELATIONS



The Employee Relations Council will support efforts to make Louisiana's workers' compensation (WC) system more effective and less costly. It will also remain diligent in protecting the solvency of the state's unemployment compensation (UC) trust fund to prevent employer UC tax increases. In most other respects, Louisiana's employment laws are generally viewed as employer-friendly when compared to other states. Unfortunately, each session, numerous bills are filed to expose employers to lawsuits from their employees and/or restrict their ability to manage their workers efficiently and productively. LABI will once again be ready to defend against such legislative intrusion in the workplace.

STATE

MAJOR ISSUES

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

LABI Position: Support any legislative actions necessary and appropriate to safeguard the solvency of the state UC trust fund so as to prevent employer UC tax increases. Support legislation to fine-tune the UC law in Louisiana and eliminate employee and employer abuses. Oppose legislation that would expand UC coverage.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

LABI Position: Support Legislation to strengthen Louisiana's WC law and oppose legislation that would expand WC coverage beyond the "Grand Bargain" and increase costs to employers. Support legislation that makes Louisiana's WC system not only balanced and equitable but also one which is competitive with other states and encourages a quicker return to work for injured employees. To this end, LABI will:

Work to implement a competitive, evidence-based pharmacy formulary that is based on medical evidence, and is designed to provide necessary medication to injured workers in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost, and to prevent unnecessary drug prescribing and dispensing;

- Support legislation to provide for quality, appropriate and evidence-based medical treatment and ancillary services, including legislation to defend and enhance the proper utilization of the Medical Treatment Schedule and to apply correct limitations and standards for the appeal process connected with review of medical director's decisions;
- Defend the exclusive remedy and statutory employer provisions of the WC law;
- Promote prosecution of the crime of WC fraud and protect employers' ability to defeat fraudulent claims;

- Advise the employer community of judicial and administrative decisions that destroy the effectiveness of legislated reforms in WC;
- Support efforts to create an efficient and less costly WC market by encouraging continued growth and increased competition within the voluntary market;
- Amend, as needed, the WC confidentiality rules or laws to provide reasonable provisions governing both the protection and release of WC information and employers' access to information regarding current and past claims; and
- Support legislation equalizing all WC indemnity benefits to a percentage of after-tax income; and
- Support legislation to reduce unnecessary litigation costs and excessive penalties and attorney fees.

CURRENT ISSUES

Collective Bargaining: Oppose legislation requiring collective bargaining and/or binding arbitration by any public body.

Drug-Free Workplace: Support legislation and promote administrative policies that make it easier for employers to maintain a drug-free workplace in Louisiana.

Forum Selection: Support legislation to protect and enhance the freedom to contract with respect to forum selection in the employment relationship.

Employee Leasing: Support legislation to ensure that professional employer organizations/employee-leasing firms do not insulate their clients from their WC and/or UC experience rating and oppose any erosion of existing statutory protections.

Employer Liability: Support legislation to limit employer liability doctrines and oppose legislation that would expand employer liability. Support legislation to repair judicially imposed employer liability doctrines established contrary to legislative intent.

Employment-at-Will: Support legislation to ensure employment-at-will as a right of all Louisiana employers.

Employment Compensation: Support legislation to protect employers' right to establish employment compensation as they deem appropriate and oppose any erosion of existing rights.

Equal Employment Opportunity: Support equal employment opportunity by coordinating existing state and federal antidiscrimination laws, but oppose any legislation that would expand upon existing remedies and protections. Support the repeal of any laws that prohibit or limit employer rights.

Government Contracting: Oppose any unreasonable administrative or legislative action pertaining to labor or employment law that would deny businesses the right to contract with government.

Incumbent Worker Training Program: Oppose legislation that would continue funding for the IWTP below the dollar amounts and trust fund trigger points in current law and enhance business access and greater flexibility in the use of monies for worker training, particularly for small businesses.

Independent Contractors: Protect the statutory criteria established for determining a worker's independent contractor status and support the implementation of "fresh start" and "safe harbor" provisions for employers who self-report incidents of employee misclassification.

Labor Relations: Oppose any state legislation designed to weaken employers' protections under existing federal laws governing labor/management relations.

- Support legislation to prohibit state and local government interference with employers' rights and protections as provided under existing federal laws governing labor/management relations.
- Support legislation that protects workers and employers from the adverse impacts of alterations or expansions to existing federal laws or regulations governing labor/management relations, especially any changes to weaken the equity of the current government-supervised secret ballot election procedure or replace it with a "card check" system subject to abuse.

Mandated Employee Benefits: Oppose any statutory intrusion into the area of employee/employer relationships, including but not limited to mandated benefits. Oppose any creation or expansion of government-mandated benefits under employer health plans except when there is a documented, actuarially positive cost/benefit for such mandates. Support state legislation that minimizes any adverse impact of federal health care mandates.

Minimum Wage: Oppose legislation establishing a state minimum wage.

Noncompetition Agreements: Oppose any erosion of the statutes that protect businesses from unfair competition by allowing them to enter into noncompetition agreements with their employees and support appropriate legislation to fine-tune such statutes as necessary.

Prevailing Wage: Oppose any attempts by the Legislature to re-enact a prevailing wage law, which would result in the state or local governments – and by extension, taxpayers – paying more for goods and services than is paid by businesses in the private sector.

Right-to-Work: Do everything necessary to maintain Louisiana as a Right-to-Work state, including opposing "agency shop" legislation, which would force non-union employees to pay dues to a union just like its members.

Second Injury Fund: Continue to assess the viability of the Second Injury Fund and support legislation to establish an equitable assessment method for its funding.

Unemployment Compensation: Support legislation to fine-tune the UC law in Louisiana and eliminate employee and employer abuses. Oppose legislation that would expand UC coverage.

Wage Records: Support full implementation of Act 822 of the 2012 regular session, allowing electronic access to wage records.

Workforce Development: Support efforts to continuously improve Louisiana’s workforce development system to become market-driven and employer connected by delegating to local workforce investment boards (WIBs) decision making and administration relative to training and employment programs while reserving oversight and funding responsibilities to a state commission. Support improved alignment of workforce development across K12 education, higher education and relevant state boards and agencies, including Louisiana Economic Development and the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Support the creation of a cabinet-level office to oversee and coordinate workforce development programs and their funding streams across state agencies in order to achieve strategic alignment between state and local efforts to establish a talent supply chain that properly serves Louisiana employer needs.

FEDERAL

CURRENT ISSUES

Advice Exemption: Oppose efforts by the U.S. Department of Labor to significantly restrict by regulation the “advice exemption” under the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959.

Comparable Worth: Oppose attempts to impose “comparable worth” in the workplace, including an expansion of the existing federal “equal pay” provisions.

Davis-Bacon Act: Support repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act, which is a federal type of prevailing wage law that results in the federal government – and by extension, taxpayers – paying more for goods and services than is paid by businesses in the private sector.

Drug-Free Workplace: Support legislation to promote a drug-free workplace. Oppose legislation, rules or standards that inhibit an employer’s right to drug test and to maintain a drug-free workplace.

Employee Training: Support federal workforce development legislation that enhances the effectiveness of the state workforce development statutes.

Employer Liability: Support legislation to limit employer liability doctrines and oppose legislation that would expand employer liability.

Federal Employee Wage Garnishment: Support legislation to allow garnishment of federal employees’ wages.

Federal Intervention in Benefit Plans: Oppose legislation and regulations that restrict employers or place further burdens on employers sponsoring benefit plans, including cafeteria plans.

Federal Minimum Wage: Oppose any increase in the federal minimum wage.

Government Contracting: Oppose any unreasonable administrative or legislative action pertaining to labor or employment law that would deny businesses the right to contract with government.

Mandated Employee Benefits: Oppose legislation that would increase costs to employers resulting from governmentally mandated benefits, including health care plans and expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Mandatory Vaccination: Oppose federal efforts to impose mandates of employee vaccinations or disease testing, or any requirement that employers cover costs from such mandates. Employers must be free to determine and decide what is appropriate for their individual operations and employees in such matters.

National Labor Relations Act (NLRA): Continue to support efforts to remove the requirement that unions represent nonmembers in a bargaining unit. Support amendments to the NLRA that would permit both union and nonunion employees to share decision-making responsibility with management. Oppose the provisions of the so-called PRO Act legislation, which seeks to do away with the balance in labor/management relationships currently assured under the NLRA and oppose attempts to include any of its components in other legislation. Oppose efforts that would prohibit construction industry double breasting or allow common situs picketing. Support efforts to restrict liberalization promoted by the National Labor Relations Board and the courts.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): Oppose any proposed rule or law that weakens an employer’s right to maintain a drug free workplace, or which requires employers to meet an unreasonable and costly ergonomic or other OSHA safety standard established without scientific validation of its value.

Overtime Pay: Oppose legislation and/or rules/regulations that would unreasonably increase an employers’ responsibility for payment of overtime obligations.

Right-to-Work: Oppose legislation to repeal or weaken Section 14B of the Taft-Hartley Act, which authorizes state Right-to-Work laws.

Striker Replacement: Oppose legislation that would prohibit an employer from hiring permanent replacement workers for employees who walk off the job.

Unemployment Compensation: Oppose legislation that would liberalize UC benefits and/or increase employers’ federal UC tax costs. Support legislation to lower federal UC taxes by giving states the authority to collect and appropriate Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) revenues to operate their employment security agencies. Support legislation to allow small business owners to forgo paying UC taxes on themselves by electing to be excluded from unemployment benefits.

Workers’ Compensation: Support legislation to simplify the Medicare Secondary Payor Act with regard to settlements of WC claims. Oppose any legislative attempt to federalize state WC acts.

CONTACT

Patrick Robinson serves as Director of the Employee Relations Council. In this capacity, his responsibilities include labor issues, such as workers’ and unemployment compensation.

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ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



LABI's goal is to protect and improve the environment while maintaining a strong economic base.

STATE

GENERAL POLICIES

Administration Liaison: Work closely with the administration to assure that regulatory agencies and legislative committees dealing with the environment understand the importance of fostering a climate conducive to economic development while protecting the environment through the use of sound science.

Consistent Enforcement: Support fair and consistent enforcement of Louisiana environmental laws and regulations, but oppose using unrelated measures, such as environmental justice actions and/or restricting the availability of tax exemption programs, as penalties for environmental violations.

General Environmental Legislation and Regulations: Support environmental legislation and regulations that balance environmental concerns with economic realities and is workable, practical, equitable and consistent.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure: Support the development of a market driven, universal, statewide electric vehicle charging network that is strategically funded and will improve the quantity, quality and variety of electric vehicle charging amenities and business and consumer services available in the state.

Fuel Mandates: Oppose legislation that mandates the use or limits the supply of any specific fuel.

Landowner Rights: Support legislation requiring that governing bodies deal openly with landowners and adequately compensate property owners for loss of use or devaluation of their property caused by environmental regulations, laws or policy. Oppose regulations that prohibit any lawful use of, or condemnation of, private property unless based on adequately demonstrated public need.

Liquefied Natural Gas: Support legislation and/or regulations that promote the development of LNG terminals both onshore and offshore in Louisiana.

Litter: Support and encourage all reasonable efforts to eliminate litter in Louisiana, including anti-litter public campaigns.

Management of Waste: Support legislation and regulations that allow business, industry and local governing authorities to take advantage of all environmentally sound waste management technologies, including but not limited to reuse, recycling and waste exchanges. LABI supports regulatory programs that encourage free enterprise and a competitive business climate and opposes excessively complex regulations that discourage the beneficial use of sound technologies and by-products.

Oil and Gas Development: Support legislation that offers incentives and a workable regulatory climate that stimulates oil and gas exploration and production in Louisiana. Support streamlining of exploration, production, and transportation permitting and a reduction of regulatory burdens. Support primacy of state regulation over the siting, zoning, permitting, regulation of hydraulic fracturing, and other aspects of oil and natural gas operations and exploration, including, but not limited to, primacy over the capturing and/or transportation of natural resource byproducts. Oppose legislation and/or regulations that would impose additional restrictions on mineral leasing, drilling permit acquisition, or other onerous requirements that act as a disincentive to exploration, production, and transportation of natural gas and oil, or the byproducts of same, unless and until valid, scientific studies document significant adverse impacts on the environment and risk assessments are attached.

Refining Capacity: Encourage expansion of Louisiana's oil refining capacity by removing any state-imposed barriers to construction of new or expanded refining facilities.

Water Policy: Support a fair, flexible, and scientifically based statewide water use policy that considers the needs of all water users. Monitor the development of state and federal water conservation programs to ensure that all water users—industrial, residential and commercial—are assured adequate access to usable water sources. Oppose new or increased taxes or fees imposed by government on the use, extraction or consumption of water.

LITIGATION

Abrogation of Contracts: Oppose legislation which would abrogate existing contracts between parties.

Contingency Fees: Oppose legislation that would authorize state or local government to enter into contingency fee contracts or to employ outside counsel to be paid by the defendants or the state from the proceeds of awards and/or settlements. Support additional legislative oversight.

Government-sponsored Litigation: The onslaught of government-sponsored lawsuits creates a damaging precedent of regulation through litigation. Oppose efforts by governmental entities to use litigation to harass businesses when engaged in lawful activities. All civil law enforcement statutes are jeopardized when the state uses regulations to extort money rather than ensure compliance.

Lawsuit Climate: Support any appropriate modifications to existing laws concerning oil and gas legacy lawsuits, coastal lawsuits, and environmental lawsuits along with proposed changes to mineral lease obligations that bring fairness to industry and the public alike, and promote rather than quash, industry growth, employment, and long-term tax revenues without compromising reasonable protection of human health and the environment. Strongly defend any legislative advances made to existing law with respect to the same.

Liability: Oppose any expansion of punitive damages, criminal penalties, or “bad actor” provisions in environmental law or regulations.

Subsequent Purchaser: Oppose legislation that creates a right of action to assert claims for environmental damages that were caused or sustained prior to acquisition by a purchaser of the property.

TAXATION

Assessment Practices/Electric Utilities: Oppose redistribution of tax proceeds to parishes other than the parish where the electric utility plant is located.

By-Products: Maintain the non-taxable status of by-products and intermediate materials.

Definition of Energy Sources: Support legislation that clarifies the definition of “energy sources” to assure that all are excluded from state sales and use tax.

Energy Taxation: Oppose suspension of tax exemptions granted to producers and consumers of energy products and sources. Oppose increased or new taxes or fees on oil, natural gas and other hydrocarbons, such as: a processing, transportation, or refinery tax; a sales tax on business utilities; a change in the calculation of the natural gas or other energy franchise taxes which increase costs. An increased severance tax or suspension of severance tax exemptions; a sales tax on natural gas transportation, a coastal wetlands environmental levy, a “first use” tax; or a property tax on minerals in place or a reservoir tax. Lastly, a change in the industrial tax exemption program (ITEP), which reduces its benefit. Also, oppose additional gasoline and special fuels taxes as a source of revenues for any purpose other than addressing infrastructure projects.

Local Energy Taxation: Oppose legislation which eliminates the constitutional ban on local taxation of all motor fuels.

Lease Use/Plant-Use Gas: Support legislation affirming the historical treatment of natural gas used at the lease and at gas processing plants as not being subject to sales or use taxes.

Mineral Taxes: Support legislation and/or regulations that will establish the fair market value for oil, natural gas, and oil and natural gas equipment for taxation purposes.

STANDARDS & REGULATORY BARRIERS

Clean Air: Support efforts to make Louisiana’s air quality programs equivalent to and no more restrictive than the federal Clean Air Act. Support legislation and rules that equitably distribute the responsibility for meeting air quality requirements among all emission sources. Support DEQ efforts to promote federal acceptance of reasonable state air quality programs. Strongly encourage DEQ to promptly update the State Implementation Plan (SIP) to incorporate EPA’s favorable changes to federal rules, and support additional regulatory reform. Oppose efforts to mandate inappropriate, costly, and inconsistent monitoring programs, including fence line monitoring.

Coal Combustion Residuals: Support efforts for DEQ to adopt a coal combustion residual state permit program.

Disposal Bans: Oppose legislation or regulations which prohibit landfill disposal of any waste stream, and which does not include a comprehensive plan to ensure that the infrastructure and arrangements will be in place when the ban takes effect. Such plan shall ensure that the banned materials will, in fact, be recycled in a cost-efficient manner to the manufacturer, generator and the recycler of the waste stream.

Environmental Audits/DEQ: Support legislation to eliminate or reduce the number of conditions a company must meet to obtain protections for self-auditing, and make the policy clear, meaningful, and useful to businesses conducting environmental self-audits.

Green Building Standards: Oppose measures mandating standards which do not demonstrate measurable or proven energy savings, or which detrimentally impact Louisiana industries.

LDH Chlorination Rules: Support efforts, including legislation, to establish reasonable, scientifically-based chlorination rules as mandated by LDH for industrial facilities, particularly as over-chlorination resulting from LDH's current mandate level can create disinfectant by-products, such as trihalomethanes.

National Air Toxic Assessments: Support transparent and open NATA process and peer review of risk-based conclusions.

Oilfield Wastes: Oppose legislation that unilaterally reclassifies oilfield wastes as hazardous or any other inappropriate, unjustified classification. Encourage the development of scientifically appropriate, reasonable testing regulations that accurately demonstrate the non-hazardous nature of most oilfield wastes. Evaluate and support appropriate disposal and treatment options for exploration and production waste for facilities regulated by DEQ and DENR.

Renewable Energy Standards: Oppose mandates that impose renewable fuels portfolio standards requiring electricity providers to obtain a minimum percentage of their power from renewable energy resources by a date certain.

UTILITIES

Alternative Energy and Feedstock Development: Support legislation that promotes use of alternative energy sources but does not unduly favor one energy form over another.

Cost of Service: Oppose legislation that shifts the cost of electricity service from one class of consumer to another. Oppose legislation or regulations that force consumers to absorb the cost of providing service to customers of another utility company in another service territory. Oppose imposition of taxes or fees to subsidize energy assistance programs within the Public Service Commission.

Electricity Market Competition: Support a fair and fully competitive retail electricity market that allows all consumers the right to choose their supplier of electricity. The move to competition should:

- Provide for the transition to competition for all consumers;
- Require the continued regulation of the transmission and distribution of electricity;
- Provide incentives that will encourage the expansion and upgrade of electricity transmission facilities;
- Promote reliability of electric service for all consumers;
- Require the equitable sharing of net verifiable stranded costs that cannot be mitigated;
- Protect consumers from unwarranted shifts in tax burdens; and
- Provide for the prompt amendment or repeal of statutory constraints to open access.

Electricity Transmission: Encourage the Louisiana Public Service Commission to require that all repairs to the electricity transmission and distribution system, to the greatest extent possible, incorporate upgrades sufficient to meet federal goals of re-tooling the nation's transmission system. Support legislation that would grant tax incentives for upgrading the state's electric transmission and distribution grid. Promote improved transmission, evaluate cost-effective storm hardening, and seek access to lower cost generation for all consumers.

Fuel Diversity: Encourage fuel-use diversity, whenever economically feasible, in order to reduce Louisiana's dependence on a single fuel for electricity generation.

Gas Market Competition: Support a fair and fully competitive retail natural gas, liquefied natural gas, and liquefied petroleum gas market that allows all consumers the right to choose their supplier of natural gas.

Utility Exemption from Louisiana Monopoly Law: Support legislation to exempt from the provisions regulating monopolies, the electric and gas utility companies which are subject to the jurisdiction of the LPSC, the City Council of the City of New Orleans, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or any other public utility regulatory body with ratemaking or other general regulatory authority over an electric or gas utility company.

AGENCY & REGULATORY MANAGEMENT

Administrative Procedures: Ensure that the Division of Administrative Law be maintained. Further, require DEQ adherence to the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) to ensure due process, fairness and accuracy in the promulgation and implementation of regulations and policies. The APA should guide the conduct of administrative procedures relative to actions and decisions by the department.

Consistency, Validity & Consolidation of Regulations: Encourage state and local agencies to streamline and simplify compliance with environmental programs by revising laws, regulations, standards, enforcement procedures, fees and penalties to be consistent with federal requirements. Consolidate, merge or eliminate duplicative or overlapping regulatory programs and reporting to reduce the costly regulatory burden

on industry. Base regulations on valid science, rather than upon unsupported allegations or claims. LABI supports DEQ's efforts to coordinate federal and state environmental programs and recognizes DEQ's primacy in federally delegated programs.

Consumer Advocacy: Oppose legislation that would establish new programs within new or existing agencies or departments that require public funding for representation or intervention in regulatory proceedings.

Disaster Recovery: Work with local, state, and federal officials and regulatory agencies to remove obstacles to economic recovery in areas damaged by natural disasters.

Emergency Response: Support legislation to give the appropriate governmental entities principal jurisdiction over emergency response action. Support DEQ's flexibility in assisting regulated facilities and generators to react and respond in the event of an emergency.

Exclusive Jurisdiction of State Agencies: Support legislation to ensure that all interests within the state are treated equally with respect to matters of environmental permitting and regulation by promoting exclusive authority of state agencies to issue environmental permits and adopt and enforce environmental regulations, including the Coastal Management Program. Such legislation should expressly preclude the ability of political subdivisions to interfere with the authority of state agencies through adoption of local ordinances that go beyond traditional land use planning and zoning so as to hinder or frustrate the ability of state agencies to make decisions regarding environmental permitting and regulation.

Interagency Consistency: Encourage an ongoing dialogue among state agencies to ensure interagency regulatory consistency.

Moratoria and Regulatory Programs: Oppose regulations and legislation that seek to impose moratoria or de facto moratoria on the exploration and/or production of natural resources, as well as the capturing and/or transportation of natural resource byproducts.

Permits:

- Streamline the permitting process. Encourage the development and use of general permits for similar groups of facilities. Encourage DEQ to eliminate the backlog of pending permits and to issue permits timely.
- Support the expansion and continued implementation of DEQ's regulatory permit program.
- Support legislation and/or regulation which minimizes uncertainty and provides clear guidance to DEQ and regulated entities relative to information, such as compliance with the "IT decision" (*Save Ourselves, Inc. v Louisiana Environmental Control Commission*, 452 So.2d 1152 (La. 1984)), which is required for issuance of permits and, upon compliance, ensures the issuance of permits.
- Oppose efforts, especially taxpayer-funded efforts to stop or inhibit economic development by those claiming to be fighting for environmental justice but who are opposed to any industrial growth.
- Support and encourage the timely granting of permits that are valid for the life of the facility, especially solid waste facilities.
- Oppose measures that would jeopardize the integrity of a permit during its term.
- Encourage informal dialogue between DEQ and the regulated community about permitting and enforcement matters. Allow permittees to review an early draft of their permit for accuracy and completeness. Encourage DEQ to accept submittal of permit applications and other information by electronic means (e-data submittal).
- Oppose any legal, regulatory, or legislative efforts that seek to challenge Louisiana's primacy over the capturing and/or transportation of natural resource byproducts.

Oilfield Wastes: Support the current jurisdiction of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality and oppose changing the jurisdiction thereof to the Attorney General or to any other department or agency.

Small Business: Support efforts to minimize the regulatory burden on small business, and support and participate in activities to assist small business with environmental compliance.

FEES & FUNDING

Agency Funding: Support adequate funding of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), through and including state general fund dollars, which reflect its regulatory mandate and the services rendered to governing authorities and the general populace. Stable, consistent funding, with strict guidelines for expenditures, outside contracts, grants and contributions must be implemented to maintain needed services and ensure accountability.

Agency Fees: Support a streamlined DEQ fee structure that accurately reflects the cost of the service provided, does not exceed that cost, funds only the specific program for which the fees are collected, and with rates distributed fairly between industry and local governing authorities. LABI will support new or increased fees only if DEQ can justify the need for the additional revenue, assures the fees will be used only for the services for which they are intended, and provides evidence of increased efficiency measures. Work with DEQ to create a consolidated and itemized fee invoicing system.

Special Funds: Legislatively Dedicated Self-Imposed Fees: Oppose raiding of legislatively dedicated funds that were created and funded by industry fees paid to accomplish specific regulatory purposes.

REPORTING

Access to Information: Support implementation of state law regarding freedom of information to assure it adequately serves the needs of the general public and the private sector, while protecting the confidentiality of sensitive information where appropriate. Support the implementation of Act 636 of 2004 that authorizes DEQ to restrict access to certain security sensitive information for the purpose of preventing its distribution or dissemination via the Internet.

Environmental Compliance Records: Support accurate facility compliance records by encouraging clear, concise differentiation by DEQ between an issued and/or pending order and a resolved and recorded legal enforcement action. Encourage DEQ to include in the official compliance record only settled or resolved enforcement actions. Support and promote prompt resolution of problematic enforcement issues and encourage DEQ and the assistant secretary to address these issues within a reasonable period of time.

Emergency Reporting: Support efforts to implement statutes requiring DEQ and the Department of Public Safety to create a statewide uniform emergency reporting and notification system. Lists of reportable chemicals and quantities must be identical, with penalties prohibited for substances not on the DEQ list.

Reporting Requirements: Work with DEQ and the Louisiana State Police to provide alternative means of communication, or a temporary suspension of penalties, for reporting violations when normal means of communication have been disrupted.

Right-to-Know: Support making Louisiana's Right-to-Know program consistent with the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act (SARA), Title III.

PIPELINES

Assessment Practices/Pipelines: Support equitable assessment practices for pipelines classified as public service properties.

Expropriation: Support the existing Louisiana statutes and constitutional guarantees for the orderly expropriation of property and for the compensation for those properties expropriated for energy-related transmission or product transportation.

Intrastate and Interstate Pipelines: Participate actively with governmental entities and leaders to ensure the viability and integrity of the state's intrastate pipeline systems and those interstate pipeline systems that operate and serve customers in Louisiana.

STORAGE

Injection Wells: Support the retention of the responsibility for injection wells related to oil and gas exploration and production, as well as the expansion of said responsibility for oil and gas byproducts, within the Department of Energy and Natural Resources.

Storage of Hydrocarbons, CO₂, and Hydrogen: In an effort to stabilize market prices of natural gas and other hydrocarbons for all consumers, support legislation to encourage development of salt domes and other storage facilities in the state of Louisiana. Support reasonable regulations for the safe permitting and operation of solution mining wells and hydrocarbon storage. Additionally, support and encourage development of deep underground saline aquifers and reservoirs and related facilities for CO₂ and hydrogen storage. Support related legislation.

FEDERAL

ONGOING POLICY

Alternative Energy and Feedstock Development: Assist in the development of a program that will promote use of alternative energy sources but does not unduly favor one energy form over another.

Clean Power Plan Rule - CCA 111(d): Oppose EPA's Clean Power Plan Rule. Continue to work with DEQ to develop practical emissions standards that do not create a negative financial or regulatory impact to Louisiana's businesses and energy consumers.

Competition: Support a fair and fully competitive retail electricity market that allows all consumers the right to choose their supplier of electricity. Oppose regulations and legislation which would have the effect of retroactive ratemaking.

Electricity Transmission: Fast track provisions of the Federal Energy Bill which will upgrade the electric transmission and distribution grid which provides power to Louisiana; assure that the system will accommodate electricity loads from independent generators and other alternate sources of power.

Energy Taxation: Support federal taxation policies that preserve domestic energy security by stimulating exploration and production. Such incentives assist energy-intensive industries, which are suffering from high energy costs and foreign competition, as well as the energy-producing industry. Also, oppose additional gasoline and special fuels taxes as a source of revenues for non-highway purposes.

Fuel Mix/Reduce Dependence on a Single Fuel for Generation: Fast track provisions of the Federal Energy Bill that allow for expansion of nuclear electricity generating facilities in Louisiana, as well as development of additional clean-coal technology for generation in the state when economically feasible.

Hydraulic Fracturing: Oppose federal regulation of hydraulic fracturing.

Moratoria, Federal Leasing, and Regulatory Programs: Oppose regulations and legislation that impose moratoria or de facto moratoria on oil and gas exploration and production in the Gulf of Mexico, as well as the capturing and/or transportation of oil and gas byproducts. Continue to support legislation that seeks to establish aggressive Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and Arctic National Wildlife Refuge leasing programs for oil and gas development. Bring attention to Department of Interior's five-year leasing program and Louisiana's need for expanding drilling areas in the Gulf of Mexico and lowering royalty rates to help boost Louisiana's economy. Revenues from such production should be shared with states that permit such activities. Oppose any efforts to restrict, pause, or delay leasing on federal and OCS lands. All potential reserves must be explored and added to the nation's production, and a balanced program between environmental and economic concerns must be achieved, rather than withdrawing properties, or unnecessarily delaying lease sales, based on unwarranted environmental pressures.

National Energy Infrastructure Zone: To assure a reliable and affordable supply of electricity to all customers, encourage implementation of the provisions of law which allow the Secretary of Energy to restore the energy infrastructure system in the event that the system is compromised in an incident or event.

Natural Gas and Crude Oil: Support policies and legislation to remove all governmental barriers to competitive pricing, accessibility and exporting to all onshore and offshore production, transportation and use of natural gas and crude oil.

Nuclear Fuel: Support legislation which would ensure the long-term viability of nuclear power for electricity generation, assure safe storage of spent nuclear fuel, and require safe transportation of nuclear products.

Oilfield Wastes: Oppose legislation that unilaterally reclassifies oilfield wastes as hazardous or any other inappropriate classification. LABI supports the EPA's current definition of hazardous wastes related to oil and gas exploration and production activities.

Pipeline Infrastructure: Support federal permitting of infrastructure projects that facilitate the transportation of resources to Louisiana consumers and other end-users.

Refining Capacity: Fast track provisions of the Federal Energy Bill that will enable construction of additional oil refining capacity in Louisiana at the earliest date.

Renewable Energy Standards: Oppose mandates which impose renewable fuels portfolio standards that require electricity providers to obtain a minimum percentage of their power from renewable energy resources by a date certain.

Renewable Fuel Mandates: Support repeal of renewable fuel standard mandates.

Revenue Sharing: Support efforts to assure a fair and equitable distribution of revenues from offshore oil and gas production.

Risk Assessment: Support legislation that will attach cost-to-risk assessments to the process by which rules are promulgated.

Royalty Valuation: Support improvements in the method by which the federal government values and collects oil and gas royalties from leases on federal property. Those improvements should be designed to create a more efficient system that adds fairness, certainty, and simplicity to the royalty valuation process while preserving the lease terms agreed upon by the producer and the federal government.

Wetlands: Support clear, consistent U.S. Army Corps of Engineers implementation of wetlands regulations. Encourage the development of regulations and policies that exempt nonviable wetlands from regulation. Support the development of mitigation banking policies and regulations that maintain economic competitiveness in an impacted watershed. Support the timely issuance of permits. Oppose efforts to amend the Clean Water Act to remove “navigable” from the definition of jurisdictional waters of the United States. Additionally, oppose any regulatory efforts by the Department of the Interior that would impede or curtail oil and gas exploration and production in the wetlands.

Waters of the U.S. Rule: Support efforts to roll back the EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ expanded definition of “waters” and adjacent land areas under federal control, as it would needlessly make the routine operations of industrial facilities newly subject to permitting and lengthy environmental reviews.

U.S. Climate Change Policy: LABI specifically opposes any cap-and-trade legislation or the imposition of any carbon tax.

CURRENT ISSUES

Clean Air Regulations: Support implementation of Clean Air Act regulations that are reasonable, cost-effective, and workable. Support efforts to prevent tightening of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Support additional reforms to the New Source Review (NSR) rules by EPA. Oppose revisions of “Maximum Achievable Control Technology” (MACT) standards which are not based on sound science and technically feasible standards. Oppose setting New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) that are not based upon clearly demonstrated technology.

Climate Change Treaties: Oppose Senate ratification and presidential approval of any national or international legislative proposal or treaty on climate change, unless developing countries are included in its requirements, which must be based on valid, peer-reviewed science, and the U.S. is not disproportionately affected by mandated greenhouse gas emissions reductions or other provisions.

Cost-Benefit Analysis: Support legislation that will require cost-benefit assessments to be included in the process by which rules are promulgated.

Economic Development: Oppose efforts, especially taxpayer-funded efforts, to stop or inhibit economic development by those claiming to be fighting for environmental justice but who are opposed to any industrial growth.

Emergency Regulatory Flexibility: Support and encourage DEQ’s and EPA’s flexibility in assisting regulated facilities and generators to react and respond in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Resources: Petition Louisiana’s congressional delegation to provide sufficient resources to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the state to address environmental matters arising from hurricanes, natural disasters and any other state emergency.

Environmental Audits/EPA: Encourage the EPA to amend its policy on self-policing to make the “protections” legally binding; eliminate or reduce the number of conditions a company must meet to obtain these protections; and make the Policy clear, meaningful and useful to businesses conducting environmental self-audits.

EPA Overfiling: Oppose the EPA’s filing of separate enforcement actions after an agreement has been reached between the state and a regulated entity under a federally delegated program. The regulated community should be able to achieve finality when it resolves an environmental dispute with DEQ (or any other state agency) in a program that has been “delegated” to the state of Louisiana by the EPA. LABI will work to eliminate EPA “overfiling,” as this practice places the regulated community in a double-jeopardy type situation.

General Environmental Legislation: Support federal environmental legislation that balances environmental concerns with economic realities and is workable, practical, equitable and consistent.

Landowner Rights: Support legislation to require the governing body to deal openly with the landowner and to adequately compensate property owners for loss of use or devaluation of their property caused by environmental regulations, laws or policy. Oppose the regulation of any use or condemnation of private property unless based on adequately demonstrated public need.

NAAQS Attainment: Support efforts to prevent tightening of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and allow for extensions of the attainment year for non-attainment areas. Encourage EPA to issue guidance regarding baseline year emissions to allow credit for emission reductions, averaging of emissions from years other than the non-attainment year, and exemptions. Support the retention of the current scientifically based standard that has been accepted by EPA as being protective of human health and the environment.

Ozone Transport and Attainment: Oppose interstate ozone transport strategies that cannot be supported by a scientifically valid cause-and-effect relationship. Encourage the EPA to complete re-designation of all parishes that are meeting and will continue to meet the air quality standard for ozone.

Permits: Support and encourage the timely granting of permits that are valid for the life of the facility.

Ozone Transport and Attainment: Oppose interstate ozone transport strategies that cannot be supported by a scientifically valid cause-and-effect relationship. Encourage the EPA to complete re-designation of all parishes that are meeting and will continue to meet the air quality standard for ozone.

Permits: Support and encourage the timely granting of permits that are valid for the life of the facility.

Primacy: Oppose any legal, regulatory or legislative efforts that seek to challenge Louisiana's primacy over the capturing and/or transportation of natural resource byproducts.

Rule Flexibility: Support legislation and regulations that provide for regulatory flexibility in return for improved environmental performance.

Superfund: Support comprehensive reforms to the existing Superfund program by prioritizing and speeding up cleanup, repealing retroactive liability, setting reasonable cleanup standards based on sound science, and opposing the imposition of new taxes.

Toxic Substances Control Act: Support reforms to the federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) that protect the public health and the environment, and that support our nation's ability to continue leading the world in developing innovative new products that benefit us all while preserving the high-quality, high-paying American jobs that are created when American companies invent, manufacture and sell American products.

Waste Bans: Support resolution at the federal level of interstate waste shipment and disposal issues.

CONTACT

Luke Bullock serves as Director of the Energy and Environmental Quality Council. In this capacity, his responsibilities include all issues impacting environmental quality focusing specifically on environmental audits, reporting requirements, clean air, coastal zone and permits.

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HEALTH CARE



LABI encourages a cost-effective, competitive health care market as an incentive to economic growth, while assuring that consumers in Louisiana continue to receive high-quality, accessible and affordable health care. LABI opposes the adoption of a single-payer, government run health care system and takes an active role in public policy that would affect health care costs and outcomes, an employer's right to contract, or an employer's flexibility to determine and provide employee benefits.

Recognizing the importance of the health care industry to Louisiana's economic development, LABI supports creative initiatives to grow a qualified allied health workforce and strong in-state capacity for medical research.

STATE

CURRENT ISSUES

Health Care Delivery: Support the continued development of sustainable approaches to health care delivery and financing that:

- Acknowledges individual responsibility to improve health status;
- Actively manages care to be efficient, affordable, high quality, and accessible – the right care, at the right price, in the right setting, without adversely affecting the private health insurance market;
- Is based on accurate information and data that are electronically accessible, including systems to enable consumer comparison of health care cost and quality information.
- Allows employers and their agents, as well as government bodies, to negotiate contracts for lower cost plans that reward quality and improved health;
- Promotes a value-based model of health care delivery that rewards performance (quality, cost, access), including managed care programs and other measures that enhance quality and contain health care costs;
- Reduce the rate of increases in health care costs without cost shifting or price controls;
- Do not shift payment responsibility from the state to employers or providers; and
- Focuses on well-being and improvements in health status, provides for employee education, health and wellness promotion, and encourages appropriate public and private wellness programs to prevent, reduce, and manage chronic diseases which lead to substantial direct and indirect costs including increased emergency room visits and hospital admissions and readmissions.

Managed Care: Support the continued development of cost effective managed care that assures quality and access to appropriate medical services. Support efforts to allow for contracting for lower cost plans and oppose attempts to exclusively contract for services

when appropriate. Oppose regulatory efforts to impose unnecessary restrictions on utilization review. Oppose attempts to circumvent appropriate managed care cost containment strategies or controls.

Alleviate Shortages: Support efforts to alleviate shortages of primary care physicians, nurses and other allied health care professionals as appropriate through, but not limited to, scholarships, increased graduate medical education, training and continuing education. Support and urge the legislature to prioritize investments, including the annual funding of dedicated funds, which are designed to meet the current and growing demands for nursing and allied health professionals.

Premium Tax Credit: Support efforts to preserve premium tax credits for insurers investing in qualified Louisiana investments and assessments paid to the guaranty associations.

Provider Taxes or Premium Taxes: Support legislative efforts to reduce local taxation on providers and health care plans. Oppose taxes, fees or assessments on health plans or health care providers that do not directly increase funding to the health plan or provider industry and therefore may increase the cost of employer-sponsored health care benefits. Support efforts to design protected fees or taxes that will enhance Medicaid funding to the industry group thereby reducing cost shifting to consumers and employers.

Regulation of Private Organizations: Oppose burdensome regulation of private health care organizations that are not necessary to protect consumers and that increase administrative costs ultimately borne by patients and health plan members. Monitor the state's efforts to implement changes required by federal law and oppose efforts that make those requirements more costly or burdensome on businesses. Oppose governmentally mandated price controls for private sector medical products, health care provider services, and health insurance, including interventions such as price setting. Oppose state imposition of restrictive licensing, regulations, or similar requirements that raise the cost of care. Oppose legislation or rulemaking that imposes burdensome bureaucratic regulations with no cost savings to employers, consumers, or the state.

Professional & Civil Liability: Support efforts to promote the affordability and availability of professional liability insurance for health care providers that is reasonably balanced with the adequacy of recovery by pa-

tients injured due to negligence. Support mediation as an alternative to legal action to resolve disputes. Support and protect the Medical Malpractice Act, and oppose judicial and legislative attempts to weaken the Act or raise its cap. Oppose legislation that would create civil liability for employers and their health plans.

Cost Shifting: Oppose changes to state health care programs that would shift payment responsibility from the state to employers, providers, or insurers.

Fraud: Encourage and support efforts to hold providers and employees accountable for the misappropriation of funds by using fraudulent practices in their provision of services.

Immunizations: Oppose legislation that seeks to eliminate, alter, or undermine the annual administration of vaccines required for all students entering elementary school in accordance with the Louisiana Department of Health's approved schedule. Oppose legislation that prohibits employers from requiring vaccinations as a condition of employment.

ONGOING POLICY

Mandated Benefits: Oppose new or expanded governmentally mandated benefits under employer health plans, unless it is demonstrated to employers through an objective, actuarial study to be a cost-effective mandate. Oppose new or expanded governmentally mandated payments by health plans for the benefit of a limited population or specific providers, unless it is demonstrated to employers through an objective, actuarial study to be a cost-effective mandate. Support state legislation that minimizes any adverse impact of federal health care mandates. Support legislation to provide employers with a tax credit for every mandated health care benefit they are required to provide.

Public/Private Partnerships: Support public/private partnerships in lieu of higher state taxes to restructure and improve the indigent health care system in Louisiana. Support meaningful restructuring of Louisiana's health care delivery system, stressing solutions that provide efficiency while providing quality care, improved health care outcomes and appropriate funding to limit cost shifting. Support the use of existing public funds to empower the uninsured to access private insurance coverage.

Health Care Anti-Competitive Activity: Oppose legislation that would increase employer health care costs by allowing any health care organization to participate in any anti-competitive activity.

Indigent Care Funding: Support the concept of allowing dollars to follow the patients.

Employer Incentives: Support efforts to provide incentives for employers to offer affordable health care benefits.

Alternatives in Health Care: Support a cost-effective alternative to health care delivery which provides better access to care with an emphasis on primary and preventative care.

FEDERAL

CURRENT ISSUES

ERISA: Support continued federal preemption of state insurance laws and regulations as provided through the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Free Enterprise: Support a fair and fully competitive health care market that does not restrict free enterprise approaches to health care solutions for both health care providers and patients.

Professional and Civil Liability: Support legislation that limits the professional liability of health care providers, provided that federal law does not preempt stricter state law. Oppose legislation that would create civil liability for employers and their health plans.

Managed Care: Oppose restrictions in managed care that would reduce its effectiveness and increase employers' costs.

National Health Care: Oppose the adoption of a single-payer, government-run health care system. Support the suspension or repeal of the components of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) that raise costs for employers and consumers, including the health insurance tax, the medical device tax, and the Cadillac tax. Oppose implementing regulations that would increase employer taxes, or other requirements that may increase costs to businesses. Support legislative and other efforts fostering market-driven insurance

and community-based health care reform, emphasizing expanded, secure access to cost-effective, quality care. Support cost-savings provisions in federal legislation to reduce excessive liability exposure of health care providers. Oppose any new government-created insurance or any other provision that may jeopardize employer-sponsored health plans.

Referral Practice Review: Review federal studies of the effectiveness of health care delivery through a competitive health care market. Support study recommendations that prohibit inappropriate referral practices.

Regulation of Private Organizations: Oppose burdensome regulation of private health care organizations that are not necessary to protect consumers and that increase administrative costs ultimately borne by patients and health plan members. Monitor the state's efforts to implement changes required by federal law and oppose efforts that make those requirements more costly or burdensome on businesses. Oppose govern-

mentally mandated price controls for private sector medical products, health care provider services, and health insurance, including interventions such as price setting. Oppose the imposition of restrictive licensing, regulations, or similar requirements that raise the cost of care. Oppose legislation or rulemaking that imposes burdensome bureaucratic regulations with no cost savings to employers, consumers, or the state.

Rights of Choice: Support legislation that will maintain the right of the employer and the employee to choose their own health care carriers and plans.

Technology and Innovation: Support and encourage effective use of technology and innovation to deliver health care services and incentive programs for implementation.

Workforce: Support federal policy and initiatives to grow a qualified allied health workforce.

CONTACT

Patrick Robinson serves as Director of the Health Care Council. In this capacity, his responsibilities include health care matters that affect employer costs.

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SMALL BUSINESS



Louisiana's small businesses play a vital role in Louisiana's economy. The growth of our state's economy greatly depends on maintaining a healthy industrial base coupled with a thriving small business community. Over 70% of LABI's membership is comprised of small businesses with less than 100 employees. So, the organization fully appreciates the profound importance of small businesses and the jobs they create. LABI recognizes their concerns over the growing risk of legal liability associated with routine business operations as well as governmentally imposed costs and regulations.

STATE

MAJOR ISSUES

TAX POLICY/TAXPAYER FAIRNESS

LABI Position: Support measures to correct the imbalance in the tax burden borne by business and to encourage industrial and business investment in Louisiana. Such measures should include: (1) eliminating inconsistencies in the administration of the state and local tax systems by centralizing the collection of sales taxes; (2) shifting the financing and delivery of many governmental services from the state level to the local level; and (3) enacting business tax measures that encourage the retention or relocation of jobs and business to this state. LABI supports efforts to ensure that small businesses are treated fairly in the tax collection process and the distribution of the burden of taxes that fund state and local government. LABI opposes measures to increase the homestead exemption, which would further shift the property tax burden to business.

Businesses in Louisiana pay a disproportionately higher share of taxes as compared to other states. In order for Louisiana to be able to compete with other states, stronger efforts must be made to develop a fairer and more balanced tax system. More needs to be done to level the playing field and reduce the tax burden borne by business, especially small businesses. There must be a properly balanced property tax structure so that small businesses do not end up paying a higher share of property taxes.

REDUCE HEALTH CARE BURDENS

LABI Position: LABI will support efforts to help employers offer or maintain employer-based health care coverage and oppose anything that would increase employers' health care costs.

Most employers recognize that after salaries or personnel compensation, health insurance coverage is the most important benefit they can offer to their employees. However, due to the ever-rising cost of health care, providing this benefit has been difficult if not impossible for small employers. Unfortunately, many employers are being forced to drop coverage because they simply can't afford it. Small businesses are finding it difficult

to contain costs when commercial insurance costs are steadily rising, unnecessary government intrusions limit employer choices, and the imposition of new business taxes or fees are a constant threat. Therefore, more needs to be done to contain health care costs so as to make health insurance more affordable for small businesses and to give them more choices in the type of coverage needed for their companies.

INCREASE AVAILABILITY & AFFORDABILITY OF COMMERCIAL LINES OF INSURANCE

LABI Position: LABI will support efforts to reduce the cost of commercial insurance for small businesses, especially in the areas of workers compensation, liability, and cybersecurity. The cost of doing business in Louisiana is constantly on the rise. Unfortunately, businesses are forced to expend resources defending suits that lack merit or fighting fraudulent claims rather than focusing on the bottom line. Rising commercial insurance costs are a major concern for all businesses. Notwithstanding the high cost of commercial insurance, many business owners struggle to find commercial coverage because many insurance companies are not willing to write policies in Louisiana. Therefore, the following must be done to help keep commercial insurance costs under control:

- Make every effort to preserve reforms enacted in the liability area.
- Oppose efforts to impose any tort remedy in workers' compensation cases.
- Support appropriate efforts to protect businesses from non-meritorious lawsuits.
- Support the enforcement of the Louisiana unified building code to enable a viable, affordable and competitive private insurance market to exist.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Education: Continue to support efforts to improve the quality of education at all levels in Louisiana by making the best possible use of tax dollars spent on education, to try new or more effective methods of education, and to demand better accountability, which will improve the quality of the workforce and economic prosperity in the state.

Freedom to Work: Over time, a number of state entities have created artificial barriers to work in the form of occupational licensing. Unless a license is necessary for public health and safety, individuals should be “free to work.” LABI supports efforts to review occupational licensing and remove costly and time-consuming barriers when possible.

Industry Training/Workforce Development: Promote cooperative efforts between business owners, education institutions and the Louisiana Workforce Commission to ensure that workforce training programs are easily available to small businesses in Louisiana, are updated regularly and are customized to meet the needs of small business owners.

Worker Training: Study and develop legislation that would allow businesses—in particular, small businesses—better access and greater flexibility in the use of monies for worker training.

CURRENT ISSUES

Department of Economic Development: Support additional emphasis by economic development entities to provide assistance to Louisiana’s small businesses. Support the consideration and distinguishment of small businesses in the decision-making process of economic development entities.

Expropriation: Support legislation that would provide appropriate treatment of private property owners regarding expropriation for “public purpose.”

Government Competition: Restrict efforts by government to provide goods and services in competition with private businesses.

Government Contracts: Support an appeals process for small businesses that are discriminated against in federal, state and local government contract bids.

Public Bid Law: Oppose any efforts to circumvent or make exceptions to the public bid law and support legislation to strengthen its enforcement.

Regulatory/Licensing Burden: Support the reduction of the regulatory burden on all businesses, especially small businesses, by reducing wasteful regulatory and/or licensing burdens on workers and small businesses. Support efforts to ensure regulations and licensing are

necessary and justified by sufficient public interest and not protectionism.

TAXES & FEES

Business Activity Tax: Oppose legislation that would impose additional or new taxes on business through a business activity, gross receipts, value-added, or any other similar taxing scheme, thus decreasing our ability to attract and retain jobs and investment in this state.

Business Tax Burden: Oppose the elimination, reduction or modification of any tax exemptions, deductions, exclusions or credits, including the inventory tax credit, unless a commensurate reduction in the relevant tax occurs. Oppose the imposition or increase of any taxes or fees that would increase the imbalance in the tax/financial burden borne by business in Louisiana. Support efforts to limit or reverse judicial expansion of the business tax burden.

Cost of Service: Oppose legislation that would shift the cost of electricity service from one class of consumer to another. Oppose imposition of taxes or fees to subsidize energy assistance programs within the Public Service Commission.

Energy Taxation: Oppose increased or new taxes or fees on natural resources used in the production of energy.

Fees: Support legislation to limit or reduce the amount of fees assessed on small businesses.

Franchise Tax: Support the elimination of the corporate franchise tax provided for in Act 6 of the third 2024 special session and oppose any reinstatement of this onerous tax.

Inheritance Tax and Gift Taxes: Protect and maintain the repeal of the inheritance tax and gift tax as enacted by 2007 Act No. 371 and 2008 Act No. 822 respectively.

Inventory Tax: Support retention of Louisiana’s inventory tax credit and explore ways to eliminate the tax completely without increasing the business tax burden.

Property Tax Millages: Support legislation to limit or restrict the rolling forward of property tax millages following a mandatory millage roll-back.

Special Funds—Legislatively Dedicated Self-Imposed Fees: Oppose raiding of legislatively dedicated funds that were created and funded by industry fees paid to accomplish specific regulatory or other purposes.

CIVIL JUSTICE

Abrogation of Contracts: Oppose legislation permitting abrogation of existing contracts.

Non-meritorious Suits: Support appropriate legislation to discourage the filing of non-meritorious lawsuits and to curb abusive solicitation and litigation tactics.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Minimum Wage: Oppose legislation establishing a state minimum wage.

Wage Discrimination: LABI supports the current state and federal laws on the books that address wage discrimination. LABI opposes legislation that expands lawsuits, including but not limited to, comparable worth and removing legal defenses.

Workers' Compensation: Support legislation to reduce workers compensation (WC) costs by overturning liberal court decisions, addressing factors responsible for escalating medical costs, and opposing the imposition of any tort remedy in WC cases. Continue to participate in the Louisiana Workers' Compensation Corporation, particularly in its capacity as WC insurer of last resort in Louisiana.

ONGOING POLICY

Consumer Advocacy: Oppose legislation that would establish new programs within new or existing agencies or departments that require public funding for representation or intervention in regulatory proceedings.

Government Efficiency: Support efforts to operate state government in a more efficient, cost-effective and fiscally responsible manner, including privatizing state government services where feasible, and encourage the utilization of technology.

Government Prompt Payment: Support prompt payment legislation that would require state and local governments to pay their bills within 30 days of invoice date and to be subject to interest, fines and penalties.

Government Efficiency: Support efforts to operate state government in a more efficient, cost-effective and fiscally responsible manner, including privatizing state government services where feasible, and encourage the utilization of technology.

Government Prompt Payment: Support prompt payment legislation that would require state and local governments to pay their bills within 30 days of invoice date and to be subject to interest, fines and penalties.

Preference Laws: Oppose bid preference laws. Support current reciprocal laws for states that deny or restrict opportunities for competition by Louisiana businesses.

Prison Enterprises: Oppose expansion of prison enterprises or inmate labor and services not used solely in correctional facilities, and support legislation requiring a public certification process, including economic impact studies, prior to the establishment of such programs.

Small Business Financing: Support legislation providing incentives for commercial financial institutions to extend credit to small businesses. Oppose any legislation that would duplicate regulatory practices and unnecessarily impose additional state authority to oversee financial transactions.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Mandated Benefits/Mandated Coverage: Oppose new or expanded governmentally mandated benefits in group health plans, except those benefits that are effective in controlling health care costs. Oppose new or expanded governmentally mandated payments by health plans for the benefit of a limited population or specific providers, except when there is a documented, actuarially positive benefit for such mandates. Oppose governmentally mandated employer-provided or employer-paid health insurance.

Mandate Offset Credit: Support legislation to provide employers with a tax credit for every mandated health care benefit they are required to provide.

CIVIL JUSTICE

Double Recovery: Support legislation to eliminate double recovery of damages.

Tort Reform: Oppose liberalization of Louisiana’s tort laws with specific emphasis on preserving reforms enacted in the following areas: strict liability, joint and several liability, punitive damages, product liability, class actions and government liability.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Labor Relations: Support legislation to prohibit state or local government interference with employers’ rights and protections as provided under existing federal laws governing labor/management relations. Oppose any state legislation designed to weaken employers’ protections under existing federal laws governing labor/management relations.

Project Labor Agreements: Protect the ban on project labor agreements on publicly funded projects.

Right-to-Work/Agency Shop: Do everything necessary to maintain Louisiana as a Right-to-Work state, including opposing repeal through any “agency shop” legislation.

FEDERAL

CURRENT ISSUES

Business Tax Burden: Oppose any increase in the federal tax burden on business or business owners, and support federal tax reform to lower the business tax rate and simplify the tax code.

Government Competition: Restrict efforts by government to provide goods and services in competition with private businesses.

Government Contracts: Support an appeals process for small businesses that are discriminated against in federal, state and local government contract bids.

Immigrant and Foreign Workers: Support federal immigration reform that ensures an adequate number of workers are available to meet the needs of Louisiana’s small businesses in seasonal industries, as well as those facing worker shortages, by (1) expanding existing foreign worker visa (H-1B, H-2B, and H-2A) programs while eliminating unworkable bureaucratic encumbrances and excessive costs, and (2) developing a reliable, in-

tegrated employment verification system with safe harbors for employers hiring in good faith.

Mandated Employee Benefits: Oppose legislation that would increase costs to employers resulting from governmentally mandated benefits, including health care plans and expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

National Health Care Reform: Support repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and oppose implementing regulations that would increase employer taxes, or other requirements that may increase costs to businesses. Analyze and review the current law and proposals being considered in Congress. Support legislative and other efforts fostering market-driven insurance and community-based health care reform. Those efforts should emphasize expanded, secure access to cost-effective, quality care. Support cost-savings provisions in federal legislation to reduce excessive liability exposure of health care providers. Support state legislation that minimizes any adverse impact of federal health care mandates. Oppose any new federal/single payor system, other government-created insurance, or any other provision that may jeopardize employer-sponsored health plans.

National Labor Relations Act (NLRA): Continue to support legislation that would remove the requirement that unions represent nonmembers in a bargaining unit. Oppose legislation that would expand or alter the NLRA to facilitate union organizing, especially any bills to replace the current government-supervised secret ballot election procedure with a “card check” system subject to abuse. Oppose legislation that would prohibit construction industry double breasting or allow common situs picketing. Support legislation to restrict liberalization promoted by the National Labor Relations Board and the courts.

OSHA: Support efforts to reform the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provisions that have an adverse impact on small business. Oppose any proposed rule or law which requires employers to meet an unreasonable and costly ergonomic or other OSHA safety standard established without scientific validation of its value.

Regulatory Burden: Support the reduction of the regulatory burden on all businesses, especially small businesses. Support legislation to streamline and simplify the permitting process for wetlands.

Retirement Systems: Support consolidation of all federal retirement systems and eliminate all special retirement systems.

Small Business Financing: Support legislation providing incentives for commercial financial institutions to extend credit to small businesses, including SBA and USDA guarantee programs. Oppose any legislation that would duplicate regulatory practices and unnecessarily create an additional federal agency to oversee financial transactions.

Social Security: Support legislation that would require all employees, including federal, state, and local employees, to pay into the Social Security System.

The Americans with Disabilities Act: Oppose liberalization of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Support revisions to the ADA that would help curb the excess litigation that negatively impacts businesses and the economy.

U.S. Climate Change Policy: LABI specifically opposes any cap and trade legislation or the imposition of any carbon tax.

Unemployment Compensation (UC): Support legislation to allow small business owners to forgo paying UC taxes on only themselves by choosing not to be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Unfunded Federal Mandates: Oppose unfunded federal mandates on state and local governments or businesses, including an increase in the minimum wage.

CONTACT

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GOVERNMENTAL REFORM



LABI encourages the enactment and enforcement of state laws and policies that are honest, fair, transparent and responsible, allowing all citizens to participate in electoral and governmental processes.

MAJOR ISSUES

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

LABI Position: If a convention is called, delegates should be independently elected. If some delegates are appointed, the business community should be well represented, given the thousands of workers they employ and their significance to the state's economy and prosperity. The public should have significant time and opportunity to engage in the Convention—both the process and deliberations.

FISCAL TRANSPARENCY

LABI Position: Support efforts to increase the transparency of state and local government operations and enhance public online access to information.

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

LABI Position: In an effort to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse, support efforts to operate state government in a more efficient, cost-effective and fiscally responsible manner, including privatizing state government services where feasible, and the utilization of technology.

CURRENT ISSUES

Boards and Commissions: Support legislation that would require public or quasi-public boards and commissions to adhere to the same legal requirements and accountability standards as other public bodies. Also, support legislation to limit the number of terms a person can serve on certain boards and commissions. Support legislation to promote experience and expertise by allowing individuals to serve on boards and commissions and to recuse themselves when an issue arises involving a conflict of interest.

Civil Service: Support legislation to reform civil service to achieve maximum efficiency in state government.

Elections: Support legislation to reduce the number of election dates to maximize voter turnout.

Ethics:

- Support the retention of an appropriate board or boards governing ethics for elected officials, public employees and lobbyists, and support the enforcement of existing laws. Monitor the activity and decisions of this board, particularly regarding their effects on the business community and the election process.
- Strengthen enforcement of Louisiana's ethics law regarding campaign finance, lobbyist disclosure and implementation and enforcement of the Code of Ethics as it relates to public employees and elected officials. Support storing ethics data in a form that is easily exportable for public consumption.
- Support retention of a strong campaign finance disclosure law, including provisions to require full disclosure of all campaign contributions. Support the current rights of citizens and corporations to contribute to political campaigns, both individually and as legally constituted committees. Support retention of a strong lobbyist disclosure law.
- Actively oppose any unjustified weakening of the current ethics law.

Government Appointments: Support efforts to change appointed governmental positions and certain elected positions to professional positions.

Investigative Independence: Support efforts to ensure that the Ethics Board and Inspector General have the independence and focus to investigate and enforce substantive ethics laws against conflicts, abuse and corruption in state government.

Little Hatch Act: Support “Little Hatch Act” provisions in the state constitution that prohibit state and local classified civil service employees from participating in certain partisan political activities while so employed.

Public Access to Legislators: Oppose any efforts to limit and/or restrict public access to legislators and/ or House and Senate chambers.

Public Meetings/Public Records: Oppose efforts to weaken the Open Meetings Law, the Public Records Law, the Election Code, the Public Bid Law and the Local Government Budgeting Act; and protect the rights of individuals and organizations to full and open participation in governmental processes. Support extending the period to which a recorded public meeting is archived for public access and legislative intent.

Retirement Systems: Support consolidation and reform of state retirement systems, including elimination of early retirement after 20 years of service regardless of age for future state employees. Oppose any expansion of benefits or coverage to help ensure fiscally responsible funding and actuarial soundness of Louisiana’s public retirement systems. Support legislation that would raise the retirement age and/or increase the years of service needed for new state employees to retire. Support the use of surplus funds to pay down the unfunded accrued liability of the state retirement systems.

State Contracts: Support strengthening existing law that prohibits awarding state contracts for goods and services to any public official or his/her immediate family.

Term Limits: Support legislation to limit the terms of all statewide elected officials and the judicial branch. Continue to support the existing law that limits the number of terms a person can serve in the Louisiana Senate and House of Representatives.

ONGOING POLICY

Initiative: Maintain Louisiana’s current referendum system, which requires that voters approve all changes to Louisiana’s constitution.

Judicial Reform: Support programs and legislation to foster judicial excellence, including, but not limited to, consolidating districts and court functions.

Office of the Inspector General: Support efforts to protect the existence of the Office of Inspector General in state law.



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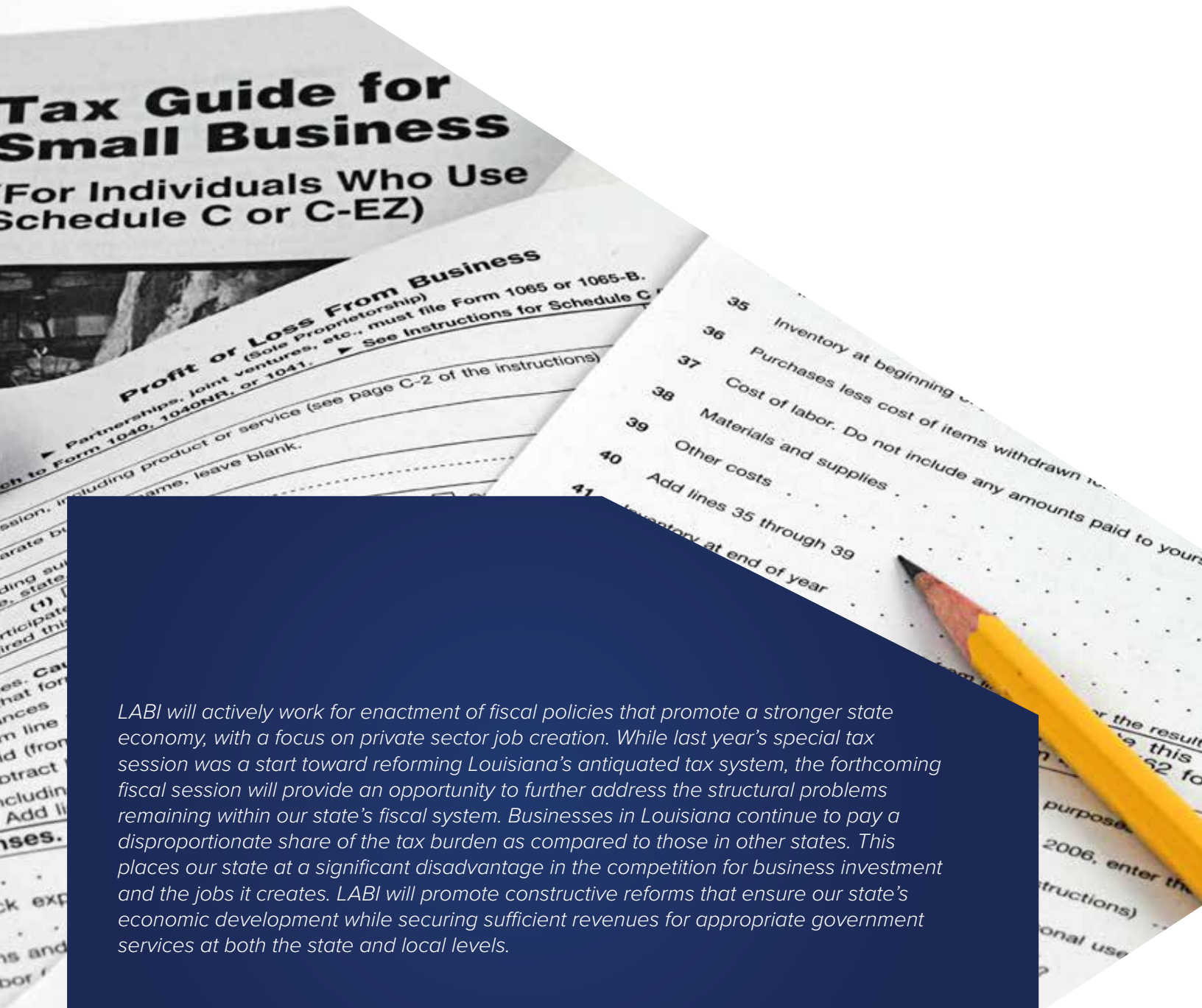
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TAXATION & FINANCE



LABI will actively work for enactment of fiscal policies that promote a stronger state economy, with a focus on private sector job creation. While last year's special tax session was a start toward reforming Louisiana's antiquated tax system, the forthcoming fiscal session will provide an opportunity to further address the structural problems remaining within our state's fiscal system. Businesses in Louisiana continue to pay a disproportionate share of the tax burden as compared to those in other states. This places our state at a significant disadvantage in the competition for business investment and the jobs it creates. LABI will promote constructive reforms that ensure our state's economic development while securing sufficient revenues for appropriate government services at both the state and local levels.

MAJOR ISSUES

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LABI Position: Restore advances in economic development by supporting measures that encourage industrial and business investment, and that create and retain jobs in our state, including those that limit or eliminate business tax burdens. Support the availability of fair and equitable tax incentives for economic development, including those for job retention, job creation, and facility modernization. Support business tax measures that encourage the retention or relocation of jobs and businesses to this state. Oppose efforts to weaken Louisiana's existing economic development tools. Continue to educate the public, the media and public officials regarding: (a) Louisiana's tax structure, (b) the imbalance in the tax burden borne by business, (c) the benefits of a competitive, properly balanced and predictable tax system, and (d) needed fiscal and spending reform.

BUDGET REFORM

LABI Position: Support long-term reforms to the structure of the state budget that require government to annually review all spending, prioritize services and rein in budget growth.

Support changes to restore voter confidence in state government, including:

- Managing budget deficits without new or increased taxes or fees, including long-term reform of costly government programs;
- Operating state government in a more efficient, cost-effective and fiscally responsible manner, including privatizing state government services where feasible;
- Achieving cost savings through the elimination or consolidation of programs and/or agencies that would not have a detrimental impact on the delivery of needed services; and
- Gradually shifting the primary responsibility of funding local services to local governments;

INDUSTRIAL TAX EXEMPTION

LABI Position: Pursue efforts to ensure a competitive and viable industrial property tax exemption program, including opposing efforts to tie the exemption to considerations not directly related to industrial development. Support establishment of a "one-stop shop," either at the state or local level, for handling applications for the industrial property tax exemption.

CURRENT ISSUES

Business Tax Burden: Support a competitive business tax environment for Louisiana's industries that are subject to substantial interstate competition. Oppose the imposition or increase of any taxes or fees that would expand the imbalance in the tax/economic burden borne by business in Louisiana. Oppose legislation and tax policies that would increase the tax compliance burden on business, including expanding requirements for withholding at the source.

Vote Requirement for Tax Relief: Oppose restrictions on the ability of the Legislature to lower taxes or grant tax relief.

Tax Administration: Support measures to eliminate abuse of authority by state and local tax collectors. Support measures restricting the imposition on taxpayers of attorney fees and audit costs of state and local governments in tax cases. Support measures that would prohibit state and local governmental agencies and taxing authorities from entering into contingency fee or other contracts with, or from employing outside counsel, auditors, or consultants to be paid by the taxpayer or whose compensation is dependent on the outcome of the audit, award, or settlement in tax cases. Support legislation to limit the use of summary procedure, and to provide standards to correct assessments that are based on error of fact or law. Oppose state tax administration that employs audit methodologies relying upon faulty assumptions and premises that tend to result in unrealistic, over-reaching, and substantial additional tax assessments.

Comptroller Office: Support the creation of a Comptroller Division to oversee the functions of the state's fiscal agencies.

Tax Elections: Support a reduction in the excessive number of local tax election dates to afford taxpayers a reasonable opportunity to evaluate the merits of tax proposals.

Economic Development Tools: Support initiatives and tax policies that will spur Louisiana's economic development, stimulating business and industry investment and job creation.

INCOME TAXATION

Business Activity Tax: Oppose legislation that would impose additional or new taxes on business through a business activity, gross receipts, value-added, or any other similar taxing scheme, thus decreasing Louisiana's ability to attract and retain jobs and investment.

Franchise Tax: Support the elimination of the corporate franchise tax provided for in Act 6 of the third 2024 special session and oppose any reinstatement of this onerous tax.

Net Operating Losses: Support full restoration and utilization of the net operating loss deduction. Oppose any further weakening of this deduction.

Unitary Reporting: Oppose efforts to impose mandatory unitary reporting for corporate income tax purposes, as the imposition of this reporting method would have a detrimental impact on economic development in the state.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Inventory Tax Credit: Support repeal of the local inventory tax with a transition to offset the loss of this revenue stream until a mechanism is established for the replacement of such state funding. Oppose efforts to repeal or restrict the inventory tax credit program so long as the local inventory tax exists.

Property Tax Assessments: Support legislation to promote uniformity and to simplify the procedures for property owners contesting their property tax assessments. Oppose efforts to undermine the Louisiana Tax Commission's constitutional authority to oversee assessments, including change orders, omitted property assessments and supplemental assessments. Support legislation to clarify existing law concerning assessment procedures, including change orders, omitted property assessments and supplemental assessments. Support appropriate and necessary reforms to the property tax system. Support legislation and changes in the Louisiana Tax Commission rules and regulations to improve the accuracy and fairness of the methods and procedures used in the assessment and valuation process. Oppose efforts by assessors to tax component parts of motor vehicles. Support the current use value system for determining the assessed value of property that is classified as agriculture, timberlands, horticulture and marshlands.

Property Tax Millages: Support legislation to limit or restrict the rolling forward of property tax millages following a mandatory millage roll-back.

Property Tax/Homestead Exemption: Oppose measures to increase the homestead exemption, which would further shift the property tax burden to business. Louisiana businesses continue to pay a disproportionate share of the tax burden as compared with other states.

SALES & USE TAXATION

Business-to-Business Sales: Oppose the imposition and support repeal of sales taxes on sales of products and/or services to businesses that are necessary for their purpose.

Recodification of Provisions: Support legislation to reorganize and recodify the state and local sales and use tax statutes to make them more understandable to taxpayers, while ensuring that no changes are made that would worsen Louisiana's already challenging business tax climate.

Statewide Centralized Collection: Support measures to promote consistency in the administration of the state and local sales tax systems, including measures to promote statewide centralized collection and administration of local sales taxes. Oppose any expansion of the state and local sales tax base until centralized collection and administration of local sales taxes is achieved.

Manufacturing Machinery & Equipment: Oppose any elimination or reduction of the state sales, use, and rental tax exclusion for manufacturing machinery and equipment, and encourage the exemption at the local level. Oppose efforts to restrict the application of the manufacturing machinery and equipment sales tax exemption for repairs, maintenance and refurbishment of machinery and equipment, including tangible personal property used in the repair, maintenance and refurbishment of machinery and equipment.

Sales Taxes: Oppose measures to levy or authorize additional statewide sales taxes, or to levy or authorize local sales taxes without voter approval. Support legislation that affirms the longstanding practice that certain articles of tangible personal property, which are delivered into a local taxing jurisdiction but earmarked for ultimate use in another jurisdiction, be subject to local sales and/or use tax only in the jurisdiction where the goods are ultimately used.

Exclusions: Protect the distinction between sales and use tax exemptions and exclusions.

Manufacturing Taxation: Protect the historic interpretation of the sales and use tax exclusion for raw materials purchased for further processing. Support the exclusion from sales and use tax of all property associated with the manufacturing of property for sale, including all utilities, raw materials, catalysts, process chemicals, and other consumable items. Oppose legislation and tax policies that would result in the taxation of by-products and/or intermediate materials for sales and use tax purposes.

Direct Pay Permits: Support measures to expand the availability of sales and use tax direct pay permits at state and local levels to all businesses.

Sales Tax on Repairs: Support the elimination of local sales and use tax on repairs to property that will be shipped out of state. Oppose efforts to expand state or local sales and use tax to labor used in repairs. Support elimination of state and local sales and use tax for repairs and services performed out of state.

NATURAL RESOURCE TAXATION

Energy Taxation: Protect and maintain the state sales tax exemptions for natural gas, electricity, water, steam, and other energy sources, and oppose any attempts to impose the sales tax on these or any other energy sources. Support legislation which will clarify the definition of "energy sources" to assure that all are excluded from state sales and use tax.

Oil & Gas Taxation: Oil and gas production and processing are critical to Louisiana's economy. LABI will:

- Oppose the imposition of any oil and gas taxes and fees, including but not limited to an oil and gas processing tax, a hydrocarbon transportation or refinery tax or fee on minerals, a first-use tax, or a coastal wetlands environmental levy,
- Oppose legislation and tax policies that would undermine the current protection of oil, gas and associated mineral rights from the imposition of property and other taxes,

- Support legislation and tax policies that affirm the historic treatment of natural gas used at the lease and at gas processing plants as not subject to sales and use tax, and
- Support legislation and tax policies that establish appropriate appraisal methodologies for determining the fair market value of all property subject to property tax, including taxable subsurface oil and gas equipment.

Salt Cavern Assessments: Oppose efforts by assessors to assess salt caverns until uniform valid valuation methodologies are adopted by the Louisiana Tax Commission. Oppose efforts by assessors to assess salt caverns as other than land.

BUDGETARY ISSUES

Special Funds: Oppose raiding of legislatively dedicated funds that were created and are funded by industry fees paid to accomplish specific regulatory and other purposes. Industry fees for regulatory services or other purposes should not be diverted to support the general operations of state government. If self-generated revenues exceed the cost of a regulatory or other program, the Legislature should reduce the fees accordingly and/or reduce the scale of such regulatory or other program.

Dedicated Expenditures: Oppose efforts to redirect trust fund dollars generated by fees from industry to expenses other than those to which they are dedicated.

Expenditure Limit: Lower the limit on state government spending to relate to the current budget. Continue to support a reasonable formula for the determination of the expenditure limit. Once an expenditure limit has been established for any fiscal year, oppose efforts by the Legislature to increase that limit, unless such increase is appropriating monies from the constitutionally restricted surplus, and the instrument for appropriating such surplus clearly states that the temporary increase in the spending cap will not affect the computation of the expenditure limit for the following fiscal year.

ONGOING POLICY

Fiscal Transparency: Support efforts to increase the transparency of state and local government operations and enhance public online access to information.

Budget Stabilization Fund: Maintain and protect the concept and integrity of the fund, and the current constitutional restrictions on distributions from the fund. Oppose efforts to use the fund as security or collateral for increasing state debt.

Taxpayer Protection and Fairness: Protect and maintain enactments addressing taxpayer protection and fairness issues relative to local sales tax contract auditors, attorney's fees charged by tax collectors, and arbitrary local sales tax assessments. Oppose any retroactive state and local legislation.

Inheritance Tax and Gift Taxes: Oppose reinstatement of the inheritance tax and gift tax.

Refund Procedures: Support taxpayers' fundamental right to a prompt refund of taxes not due a taxing authority.

"Fiscal Only" Legislative Sessions: Support the continuation of a system of alternating fiscal/non-fiscal legislative sessions.

Statewide Taxing Districts: Oppose measures to create a statewide taxing district, whose boundaries are coterminous with the state, which has the authority to levy sales, use, or any similar tax for any purpose.

Fees for Services: Support legislation codifying present jurisprudence, which provides that the imposition or assessment of charges or fees, by or for the benefit of the state or any board, department, or agency of the state, should not either: (1) have raising revenue as its primary purpose, or (2) clearly and materially exceed the cost of regulation or conferring special benefits upon those assessed (*Audubon Insurance, et al v. Bernard, et al*) (La. 1983).

Advance Collection of Sales Tax: Protect and maintain the elimination of the advance sales tax collection program.

Mineral Property Taxes: Support legislation and/or regulations that will establish the fair market value for oil,

Property Tax—Public Service Property: Support a reduction in the ad valorem tax on property acquired by public service entities after deregulation of those companies has been implemented. Any revised system of public service property taxation should not result in a shifting of the property tax burden from regulated to non-regulated businesses.

Retirement Systems: Support consolidation and reform of state retirement systems, including elimination of early retirement after 20 years of service regardless of age for future state employees. Oppose any expansion of benefits or coverage to help ensure fiscally responsible funding and actuarial soundness of Louisiana’s public retirement systems. Support legislation that would raise the retirement age and/or increase the years of service needed for new state employees to retire. Support the use of surplus funds to pay down the unfunded accrued liability of the state retirement systems.

CCUS Taxation: Oppose any taxes and fees on tangible personal property that is necessary and essential in transportation, storage or usage related to sequestration, disposal, or nature of carbon oxides.

Hazardous Waste Tax: Oppose new or increased taxes on the generation, transportation, storage, disposal, incineration, recycling, injection or treatment of hazardous waste or any permitted emission.

Annexation: Support legislation to require municipalities to notify affected property owners before annexing any property.

Highway and Infrastructure Funding: Support the use of objective criteria, including fostering economic development, to prioritize funding for state highway construction projects. Oppose allowing the Legislature to add or substitute projects in the final construction program. Oppose repeal of any provisions of Act 486 of 2021.

Prevailing Wage: Oppose any attempts by the Legislature to re-enact a prevailing wage law, which would result in the state or local governments—and by extension, taxpayers—paying more for goods and services than is paid by businesses in the private sector.

FEDERAL

CURRENT ISSUES

Carbon Tax: Oppose legislation and regulations that would impose a direct or indirect carbon tax.

Business Tax Burden: Oppose any increase in the federal tax burden on business or business owners, including repeal of any of the 2017 tax reforms, and support legislation to expand the 2017 federal tax reforms and make them permanent.

Economic Stimulation: Support legislation that would stimulate the economy by allowing taxpayers to keep more of their own money for investment in the private sector.

Spending Reduction: Since the financing of large government deficits each year consumes much of the capital that would otherwise be available for business investment needed to improve productivity and create jobs, support programmatic review and serious consideration of reasonable, specific spending cuts. LABI supports program-specific reductions as a preferred alternative to an across-the-board spending freeze.

Taxation of Health Insurance/Employee Benefits: Support repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and oppose implementing regulations that would increase employer taxes. Oppose legislation that would impose a direct or indirect tax on health insurance, as well as oppose the elimination of tax exclusions and deferrals on health, pension and disability benefits. LABI recognizes that such elimination could help close the budget deficit in the short term; however, the long-term effects on Social Security, Medicare and other government social programs may be greater than those systems can sustain.

CONTACT

Jim Patterson serves as Director of the Taxation and Finance Council. In this capacity, his responsibilities include tax and fiscal matters that impact Louisiana’s businesses and economic development.

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TECHNOLOGY



Technology constantly changes the way we live, work, and socialize. Innovations and technological advancements stimulate our economy, improve workplace training programs and make it easier for businesses to deliver goods and services to the ever-expanding marketplace.

STATE

MAJOR ISSUES

FISCAL TRANSPARENCY

LABI Position: Support efforts to increase the transparency of state and local government operations and enhance public online access to information.

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

LABI Position: Support efforts to operate state government in a more efficient, cost-effective and fiscally responsible manner, including privatizing state government services where feasible, and the utilization of technology.

INTERNET REGULATION

LABI Position: Oppose legislation and regulations that impose costly and unnecessary obligations on companies that make use of the internet in their business model.

CURRENT ISSUES

Broadband: Support policies that encourage private investments in Louisiana from technology companies. Investing in advanced technology infrastructure is necessary to support new innovations and the explosion of technology usage. Extending broadband services to more Louisianans will create jobs, lead to the development of new, innovative products and fuel economic growth. It will connect Louisiana citizens to educational and employment opportunities and open the door to better, less expensive health care. Louisiana should be technologically neutral and support an all-of-the-above approach to connecting more Louisianans. Oppose legislation which would seek to regulate the internet or broadband as a utility.

Education: Because the pace of technology continually increases, our teaching methods must adapt to this ever-changing environment. Support expanding electronic distance learning systems that give equal access to all students.

Gig Economy: The gig economy has proven to be a lifeline to many during tough economic times. Oppose proposals to reclassify independent contractors as employees as they will hurt both workers and businesses.

Innovative Technologies: Oppose unreasonable policies which would make Louisiana less welcoming to innovative companies, including legislation to prohibit innovators from conducting live testing of new products or services in a controlled environment.

Patent Enforcement: A strong patent system is needed to support emerging technologies and innovative ideas. Continue to safeguard the patent process to help protect intellectual property rights. Also, support efforts to deter bad faith patent enforcement.

Research and Development Incentives: Support the expansion of incentives designed to aid our state's research and development industries.

Sales Tax Exemption for Research & Development: Support sales tax exemptions for the cost of material and equipment purchased for the purpose of research and development.

Tax Incentives: Support the availability of fair and equitable tax incentives for economic development, including those for job retention, job creation, and facility modernization. Support business tax measures that encourage the retention or relocation of jobs and businesses to this state. Oppose efforts to weaken Louisiana's existing economic development incentives.

Technology Transfer: Create a statewide technology transfer network which transcends geographic and political boundaries to develop commercially viable technologies from our state's universities and colleges.

Worker Training: Study and develop legislation that would allow businesses, small businesses in particular, greater access and flexibility in the use of monies for worker training specific to technology.

ONGOING POLICIES

Cybersecurity Issues: Support continued research, innovation and collaboration between government, educational institutions and the business community to foster a secure infrastructure environment for commercial, consumer and intellectual property protection and public safety. Support education of the business community of cybersecurity threats and best practices to mitigate these threats.

Technology Contracts: To increase business participation and competition for state government technology contracts and initiatives, LABI supports efforts to make technology-related requests for proposals easily available online to the technology community at large.

FEDERAL CURRENT ISSUES

Civil Liability: Oppose legislation that would create new causes of action related to patent protections and privacy.

Cybersecurity Issues: Support continued research, innovation and collaboration between government, educational institutions and the business community to foster a secure infrastructure environment for commercial, consumer and intellectual property protection and public safety. Support education of the business community of cybersecurity threats and best practices to mitigate these threats.

Internet Regulation: Oppose legislation and regulations that impose costly and unnecessary obligations on companies that make use of the Internet in their business model.

Patent Reform: A strong patent system is needed to support emerging technologies and innovative ideas. Continue to safeguard the patent process to help protect intellectual property rights. Also, support efforts to deter bad faith patent enforcement.

Spam: Unsolicited bulk commercial e-mail, often referred to as “spam,” undermines consumer confidence in e-commerce. The business community supports federal laws that prohibit the proliferation of pornographic,

fraudulent and misleading spam and supports federal laws that force Internet solicitors to comply with user “opt-out” preferences.

Content Moderation: Oppose any state effort to address content moderation which would make Louisiana an outlier and lead to Louisiana businesses being deprived of digital platforms. Encourage Congress to update Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act to include protections for commercial and political speech by digital platform users while continuing to protect digital platform providers from frivolous lawsuits regarding content moderation.

Telecommunications: Only with competitive technologies can the U.S. participate fully in the global economy. Without them, U.S. companies may be forced to move jobs overseas. Unfortunately, the nation’s laws and regulations have failed to keep pace with advances in technology, stifled new investment, and hindered the deployment of new technologies.

- Federal telecommunications laws and regulations must be updated to foster innovation, expand consumer choice, spur investment, create jobs, enhance efficiency, and increase productivity.
- Telecommunications markets should be driven by consumer demand, advances in technology, and competition between telecommunications companies, while encouraging public safety, consumer protection and other public interest goals.
- Government should not burden consumers with discriminatory or excessive telecommunications taxes, nor should obsolete regulations limit Americans’ access to innovative services and choices.
- Consumer choice, public/private partnerships and private-sector investment should drive the deployment of high-speed Internet access into our communities.
- Government should look to put as much spectrum in the private sector as possible to speed connecting Americans to high-speed mobile internet. At the same time, they should oppose calls to nationalize telecommunications networks.

Workforce: Support federal immigration reform that improves Louisiana businesses’ access to the immigrant workforce needed to remain competitive by expanding existing high-skilled work visa H-1B programs while eliminating unworkable bureaucratic encumbrances and excessive costs.

CONTACT

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TRADE, TRANSPORTATION & TOURISM



LABI recognizes the direct correlation between a thriving business community and investing in a safe and sustainable transportation system. A modernized infrastructure system across all modes of transportation is paramount in fueling Louisiana's economy, and LABI is focused on common sense policies and reforms geared to increase statewide productivity, enhance businesses' ability to move their products across the nation, and remain globally relevant.

LABI encourages the enactment and enforcement of state and federal laws and policies that promote long-term solutions to Louisiana's transportation needs, free flow of national and international trade, and promotion of the state's unique tourism attractions.

STATE

MAJOR ISSUES

ECONOMIC EXPANSION

LABI Position: Support criteria that increase the level of economic activity for businesses in Louisiana. Support strategic planning proposals that prepare the state's infrastructure for rapid economic and industrial growth. Support increased state-level commitment to infrastructure investment, including preservation and maintenance for existing infrastructure, to promote economic growth.

HIGHWAY PRIORITY PROGRAM

LABI Position: Support the use of objective and transparent criteria aligned with state and regional priorities, to prioritize funding for state highway construction projects. Oppose allowing the Legislature to add or substitute projects that have not been prioritized and placed in the statewide priority program. Oppose repeal of any provisions of Act 486 of 2021.

TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND

LABI Position: Support the integrity, adequacy and solvency of the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF), and any subfunds. Encourage responsible and practical proposals that optimize the utilization of the dedicated funds. Support allocation of any new transportation funding specifically to functions associated with project delivery and construction.

EFFICIENCY, FISCAL TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

LABI Position: Support efforts to increase the transparency and accountability for LADOTD operations and enhance public online access to project information to ensure efficient and responsible spending of taxpayer dollars. Support legislation to streamline and enhance efficiency. Support appropriate level of outsourcing of DOTD activities.

CURRENT ISSUES

Air Transportation: Support the development of adequate air transportation facilities in Louisiana, including international air service.

Commercial Transportation: Oppose legislation that would unreasonably discriminate against or unduly burden the free flow of commercial transportation, and support legislation to streamline or enhance the efficiency relative to administrative regulations.

Government Prompt Payment: Support prompt payment legislation that would require state and local governments to pay their bills within 30 days of invoice date and be subject to interest, fines and penalties.

Ports: Actively support the development and improvement of port facilities and or services that enhance economic activities in Louisiana. Encourage initiatives that support global competitiveness of the state's businesses.

Port Priority Program: Actively support the port priority program in its endeavor to adequately fund port facilities in Louisiana relative to appropriate project priorities.

Trade: Support efforts that promote national and international trade opportunities for Louisiana businesses. Oppose legislation that restricts free trade.

ONGOING POLICY

Business Fees: Oppose fees and fee increases that exceed the cost of funding the programs for which they are assessed that would have a negative impact on trade, tourism or transportation.

Business Tax Burden: Oppose tax increases that would have a negative impact on trade, tourism or transportation.

Disaster Recovery: Work with local, state, and federal officials and regulatory agencies to enhance the economic recovery of trade, tourism, and transportation industries damaged by natural disasters.

Flood Protection: Support regional flood protection oversight by boards nominated by and comprised of professionals.

Free Enterprise: Oppose any government restrictions that would make Louisiana businesses less competitive relative to businesses in other states.

River Pilotage: Continue to promote and support the regulatory structure for pilotage with the overall objective of establishing safe, reliable, and cost-effective pilot service.

State Beautification: Support and encourage all reasonable efforts to eliminate litter in Louisiana, including anti-litter public campaigns and better enforcement of existing litter laws. Support and encourage state beautification efforts.

Tourism Promotion Funding: Support adequate revenues for the promotion of Louisiana's unique tourism attractions, heritage and cuisine.

FEDERAL

Business Fees: Oppose fees and fee increases that exceed the cost of funding the programs for which they are assessed that would have a negative impact on trade, tourism or transportation.

Business Tax Burden: Oppose tax increases that would have a negative impact on trade, tourism or transportation.

Business Regulatory Burden: Oppose increasing the regulatory burden on business that would have a negative impact on trade, tourism or transportation.

Federal Trade: Continue to encourage Congress to support Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) focused on leveling the playing field for American manufacturers, exporters and businesses, especially in Louisiana.

Highway Trust Fund: Support Congressional authorization for Louisiana and other states to obligate all the states' federal highway apportionments and allocations each fiscal year. Support legislation to obligate a minimum of 100% of federal transportation taxes and fees back to Louisiana. Oppose the rescission of un-obligated apportionments.

Homeland Security: Support the development of fair, effective and equitable methods of allocating homeland security program initiatives and costs.

International Trade: Support federal initiatives to enhance the global competitiveness of Louisiana businesses.

Rail Competitiveness Act: Support federal legislation and policies to promote competition among railroads.

Waterway Maintenance: Support adequate funding for navigable state waterway maintenance.

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