

UNITED AGAINST POVERTY

United Way of
Southeast Louisiana



UWSELA PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE 2017 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA UNITED AGAINST POVERTY KIM SPORT, Public Policy Chairman

The 2017 Louisiana State Legislative Session is scheduled to convene at noon on Monday, April 10th with final adjournment no later than 6pm on June 8th.

United Way of Southeast Louisiana's **Blueprint for Prosperity** serves to advance our goal and objectives to eradicate poverty and assist **ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)**, which represents the growing number of hardworking individuals, families across Louisiana and the nation who are working but unable to afford the basic household necessities, including housing, child care, health care, food and transportation. UWSELA Public Policy Committee's Legislative topics fit into the "**2017 United Against Poverty Agenda**" and also serve to advance our **Blueprint for Prosperity**.

EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Young children in Louisiana should have access to high quality early care and education that ensures they are off to a smart start in life. Expanding access to high quality early learning programs will improve child outcomes, strengthen our families and workforce, and build our economy. UWSELA will continue working to maintain the current Early Childhood Education (ECE) funding and also support an increase of \$25M for ECE. This work is done in collaboration with a coalition of 40 organizations statewide.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) *(Special Session Item)*

Louisiana was the first southern state to adopt the bipartisan EITC. The state EITC helps low-income working families make ends meet and encourages and rewards work. UWSELA will work to maintain the EITC funding and we will maintain our previous position to increase the EITC to 7%.

Pay Equity

Louisiana ranks last in the United States when it comes to pay equity for women with the widest pay gap in the country. The most recent statistics show Louisiana women earn on average 65 cents for each dollar earned by men. UWSELA will continue to advocate in favor of Pay Equity policy as recommended by the Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission in accordance with our United Against Poverty Agenda (ALICE) and in support of our Blue Print for Prosperity.

HEALTH

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is a public health crisis, not just in Louisiana but nationwide. Research shows that Louisiana has risen in rank from number 4 to number 2 in the nation for the number of women who are killed by domestic homicides. We have witnessed for the last six months horrifying deaths of mothers, children and even police officers. The UWSELA will work to implement adjustments in legislation passed since 2016. We are also working with the Louisiana Law Institute as we prepare for comprehensive legislative reforms in the 2017 regular session

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING

UWSELA will continue to collaborate with community partner organizations in support of sentencing reform and prisoner re-entry programs. These partners include:

- Louisiana Youth Justice Coalition (LYJC) - Sentencing Reform
- Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI)
- SMART On Crime - Sentencing Reform

Federal Legislation**Office on Violence Against Women**

Several large programs and entire chunks of federal agencies are on the chopping block that includes all 25 of the grant programs managed by the Office on Violence Against Women, housed in the Department of Justice. UWSELA will work with our Louisiana Congressional Delegation to maintain this office for families impacted by violence.