



# United Way of Southeast Louisiana PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE



## 2016-2017 United Against Poverty Legislative Wrap-Up

United Way of Southeast Louisiana's (UWSELA) **Blueprint for Prosperity** advances our mission to eradicate poverty and assist **ALICE** (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). **ALICE** represents the growing number of hardworking individuals and families across Louisiana 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 2017 Legislative topics serve to advance our **Blueprint for Prosperity**. We advocate for issues approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT) to assist our most vulnerable citizens.

**THANK YOU to our 2017 Legislative Champions:** Rep. Patrick Connick, Sen. Sharon Hewitt, Rep. Walt Leger, Sen. Danny Martiny, Rep. Helena Moreno, Sen. JP Morrell, Rep. John Schroder, Sen. Gregory Tarver, and Rep. Malinda White. Many thanks to UWSELA BOT, Women's Leadership Council, staff and all the

advocates who made calls and sent emails to Legislators and attended Committee Hearings.

## EDUCATION BILLS

United Way of Southeast Louisiana's 2017 ALICE Report shows that **42% of Louisiana Families are struggling to get by**. In an **ALICE** Household Survival Budget for a family of four, child care accounts for 21% of the family budget. Louisiana provides some additional resources to families, but there is still a 46% gap in resources for all households to meet the basic **ALICE** threshold for child care. The Ready LA Coalition, which includes groups like the Committee of 100, Louisiana Early Childhood Business Roundtable, numerous Chambers of Commerce, and United Way of Southeast Louisiana called on state lawmakers for increased investment to expand access to high quality early child care and education.

As a Ready LA Coalition partner, UWSELA celebrated multiple victories coming out of the 2017 Louisiana Legislative Session. The Coalition successfully advocated for **over a \$5 million increase in the School Readiness Tax Credits funding, a 30% increase**, and also successfully defended against five bills that would have reduced or eliminated these tax credits. BESE will now need to pass emergency rules to take advantage of these funds.

### **SR 209** authored by Senator J.P. Morrell

BESE - Requests the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to take action relative to School Readiness Tax Credits with respect to the repeal of the Education Tax Credit.

### **HR 217** authored by Representative Patricia Smith

TAX CREDITS - Requests that the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education take action relative to School Readiness Tax Credits with respect to the repeal of the Education Tax Credit.

**There was no restoration of funding for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)**, which has been cut by over \$65 million in the last 8 years, an almost 70% reduction. Due to these cuts, the Louisiana Department of Education (DOE) will close the CCAP program to new children and begin a waiting list for CCAP eligible working families starting July 1, 2017. ([Click here to view DOE's press release](#)).

Legislation was passed to create a **Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund** to provide a 1:2 state match for funding by local entities for certain early childhood education programs. Although no funding was appropriated this year, this legislation provides a structure that can be funded in future years.

### **ACT 353 (HB 584)** authored by Representative Walt Leger, III

Funds/Funding - Creates the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund and provides for awards to local entities for certain childhood education programs. This bill creates a state match fund, which rewards local governments for investing in high quality early childhood education and expanding access to low-income families.

**Pre-K Programs** took a 2% cut, as did many other programs across the board. It is hoped that any loss of slots will be made up in the expansion next year of the federal Pre-K Expansion Grant that will increase by 440 slots in the 2017-18 school year. This federal grant will end after the 2018-19 school year.

**ACT 392 (SB 225)** authored by Senator Sharon Hewitt

**Curricula** - Creates the Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory Council (LaSTEM) under the auspices of the Board of Regents to coordinate and oversee the creation, delivery, and promotion of STEM education programs, to increase student interest and achievement in the STEM fields to ensure the alignment of education, economic development, industry and workforce needs, and to increase the number of women who graduate from a postsecondary institution with a STEM degree or credential.

As we celebrate these victories together, we are mindful that much more work remains.

## FINANCIAL STABILITY BILLS

Louisiana ranks last in the United States when it comes to pay equity for women. The most recent statistics show Louisiana women earn on average 65 cents for each dollar earned by men. UWSELA continued 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 and in support of our Blueprint for Prosperity.

Louisiana’s first **Equal Pay Summit** was held on March 10, 2017 in Baton Rouge at the Shaw Center for the Performing Arts, unveiling UWSELA’s Equal Pay video produced for the Summit featuring key men and their daughters throughout the state in favor of equitable pay. Several UWSELA BOT members and volunteers participated in the video including: Bob Merrick and Rick Haase of Latter & Blum, Bob Kimbro (Campaign Chair) of EY, our President/CEO Michael Williamson and staff members Michelle Green and Tap Bui. Charmaine Caccioppi serves as Chair of the Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission and Kim Sport along with April Blanco Springfield served as co-chairs for the Equal Pay Summit.



Panels were comprised of business leaders and state representatives hoping to improve the condition of pay equity in our state, including UWSELA BOT member John Foley, President and CEO of Pan-American Life. Foley served as a panelist for the “Business Solutions and Practices” segment. Other BOT members who attended the Summit included Joe Exnicios, Norma Grace, Cathy McRae, and WLC members Alice Glen and Madalyn Schenk.

**HB 222** authored by Representative Helena Moreno – **STALLED**

This equal pay bill failed once again to advance out of the House Labor and Industrial Relations Committee. The bill would have prohibited an employer from retaliating against an employee for discussing wage information.



[View the full testimony.](#)

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

UWSELA and collaborative partners were successful in maintaining the EITC without a sunset provision.

## HEALTH BILLS



**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Domestic Violence is a public health crisis, not just in Louisiana, but nationwide. Research shows that Louisiana rose from fourth to second in the nation for the number of domestic violence homicides. UWSELA, in partnership with our collaborative partners, gained big victories in Domestic Violence legislation this session, successfully advancing five pieces of legislation to help protect victims of domestic abuse.

**ACT 79 (HB 27)** authored by Representative Patrick Connick

Domestic Abuse - Amends the definition of "household member" to include all persons presently or formerly living in the same residence in a sexual or intimate relationship. Removes the requirement that persons be of the opposite sex.

**ACT 84 (HB 223)** authored by Representative Helena Moreno

Domestic Abuse – Creates the crimes of battery of a dating partner and aggravated assault upon a dating partner.

**ACT 89 (HB 499)** authored by Representative John Schroder

Crime - Requires the issuance of a protective order against persons convicted of stalking during probation, and removes an exception for private investigators hired by stalkers to harass their victims.

**ACT 90 (HB 509)** authored by Representative John Schroder

Family Violence - Enhances penalties for violations of protective orders. A first violation with a concurrent injury to the protected person and a second violation without a concurrent injury are now felony offenses.

**ACT 91 (HB 524)** authored by Representative John Schroder

Civil/Discovery - Authorizes a district attorney to request a stay of all or a portion of discovery in actions for divorce, custody, child support, visitation, or protective orders when such discovery will adversely affect the ability of the district attorney to conduct a related criminal investigation or the prosecution of a related felony criminal case.



**HCR 26** authored by Representative Helena Moreno

Criminal/Victims - Directs the Louisiana State Police Crime Lab and the Louisiana attorney general to study and make recommendations for the implementation of a tracking system relative to the status of sexual assault collection kits.

**HCR 79** authored by Representative Malinda White

Domestic Abuse - Requests the Louisiana State Law Institute to study state laws governing domestic abuse, domestic violence, and stalking and to work with the United Against Domestic Violence Coalition in making recommendations to the Legislature.

**ACT 235 (SB 38)** authored by Senator J.P. Morrell

Counseling/Guidance - Provides with respect to mental health counselors.

**ACT 82 (HB 192)** authored by Representative Helena Moreno

Drugs/Controlled - Provides for limitations on the prescribing of opioids.

**ACT 88 (HB 490)** authored by Representative Walt Leger, III

Drugs/Prescription - Creates the Advisory Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education.

## COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING



**HCR 74** authored by Representative Walt Leger, III

Representative Leger of New Orleans recognized Kim Sport, UWSELA BOT member and Chairman of Public Policy Committee for her many accomplishments, countless contributions, and tireless service to her community and the state of Louisiana. In 2013, Kim became the first Public Policy Chairman of UWSELA. During the 2014 Regular Session of the Legislature, she led efforts to have historical Domestic Violence legislation introduced to help victims of domestic abuse immediately divorce their abusers, provide punitive damages for physical and mental injuries caused by family violence, increase criminal sanctions for domestic abuse and violations of protective orders, and prohibit abusers from possessing a firearm for the duration of a protective order issued against the abuser and for ten years after a conviction for domestic abuse battery.

**HCR 111** authored by Representative Helena Moreno

Representative Moreno expressed condolences upon the death of Nancy Meyers Marsiglia. Nancy was one of the Founders of UWSELA Women's Leadership Council in 2002. Her volunteer leadership was instrumental in the formation of United Way's Success By 6 Initiative, ensuring that all children, regardless of income, received access to high-quality early education and were ready to learn before entering kindergarten.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

United Way of Southeast Louisiana continued to work in strong collaborative partnership with **Smart on Crime (SOC)**, **Louisiana Youth Justice Coalition (LYJC)**, and **Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PR)** to address criminal justice reform and strengthen community policing standards in Louisiana. This session, Louisiana lawmakers enacted changes to shrink the number of people in prison and bolster programs aimed at keeping them from reoffending after they leave.

The Pew Institute estimated the implementation of these bills will reduce the state's prison population by 10% over the next decade. The savings the state will generate for no longer housing those inmates is projected to be \$262 million, of which 70% has been obligated for programs to rehabilitate offenders and support victims. Most significantly, the package of bills aims to overhaul sentencing in the state criminal codes. The package will reduce mandatory minimums, trim sentences, and give some inmates access to parole eligibility sooner. It creates a medical furlough program, which allows the sickest inmates to temporarily receive treatment off site, and be eligible for Medicaid, which saves the state on medical costs. The package overhauls drug sentencing, allowing lighter sentences based on weights, and streamlines the state's many incongruous theft penalties. One bill in the package will limit how often juvenile offenders can receive life without parole sentences. The measure also expands prison alternatives, like drug court, and expands safety nets for people getting out of jail and returning to their communities by reducing their financial burdens and helping them have better access to jobs. Another bill improves the way victims are notified when offenders have parole hearings or are released.

**ACT 280 (SB 139)** authored by Senator Danny Martiny

Provides alternatives to incarceration like drug rehabilitation. Expands probation eligibility to third-time, nonviolent offenders, as well as first-time, lower-level violent offenders. It also gives opportunities for release and consolidates eligibility for parole consideration for prisoners convicted of nonviolent, non-sex offenses at 25% of sentence served.

**ACT 281 (SB 220)** authored by Senate President John Alario

Focuses on prison space for serious and violent offenders by removing less serious crimes from the violent crimes list and merging redundant theft and burglary offenses.

**ACT 282 (SB 221)** authored by Senate President John Alario

Works with repeat offenders by lowering the mandatory minimum sentence for second and third offenses.

**ACT 277 (SB 16)** authored by Senator Dan Claitor

Ensures that most people sentenced to life as juveniles receive an opportunity for parole consideration after serving a minimum of 25 years in prison.

**ACT 260 (HB 249)** authored by Representative Tanner Magee

Works with offenders who are given fines they cannot pay by determining a person's ability to pay and creating a payment plan with which they can comply. It also will differentiate punishments for people who are unable to pay compared to people who choose not to pay.

**ACT 261 (HB 489)** authored by Representative Walt Leger, III

Helps to end the cycle of re-imprisonment by investing in programs and policies meant to help keep offenders from repeating past behaviors. It also supports crime victims by mandating the collection and reporting of data to track the outcomes of the Justice Reinvestment package.

**ACT 258 (HB 116)** authored by Representative Stephen Dwight

Streamlines registration for crime victim notification and ensures that victims can request certain measures for their individual safety as a condition of an offender's release.

**ACT 262 (HB 519)** authored by Representative Julie Emerson

Streamlines the process for people with criminal convictions to apply for and receive occupational licenses.

**ACT 264 (HB 680)** authored by Representative Joe Marino

Suspends child support payments for people who have been incarcerated for more than six months unless the person has the means to pay or is imprisoned for specified offenses. It also allows courts to extend child support payments beyond the termination date for the period of time in which payments were suspended.

**ACT 265 (HB 681)** authored by Representative Helena Moreno

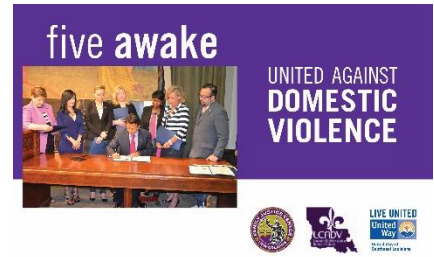
Lifts Louisiana's ban on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, also known SNAP benefits or food stamps, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits, also known as TANF benefits or welfare, for drug offenders returning home from prison.

For more in-depth information concerning our agenda and legislative bills please visit: [www.legis.la.gov/legis/home.aspx](http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/home.aspx); [www.unitedwaysela.org/advocate](http://www.unitedwaysela.org/advocate), [www.policyinstitutela.org/](http://www.policyinstitutela.org/), [www.louisianapartnership.org/](http://www.louisianapartnership.org/) and [www.labudget.org/lbp/](http://www.labudget.org/lbp/).

# UWSELA PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

## “Five Awake”

Screenings, Legislative Affairs Panel Discussions, Awards  
2016-2017



Louisiana has been called one of the most dangerous places in America for women due to domestic violence homicides. But five strong, determined Louisiana women have helped change that. The documentary short film “*Five Awake*” chronicles their championing of a historic legislative package to protect victims of domestic abuse and save lives. Their advocacy resulted in unanimous passage of the most comprehensive package of bills ever aimed at stopping domestic violence. “*Five Awake*” shows how grassroots efforts by the public can lead to significant and unexpected victories in the Louisiana Legislature.

The 2016 New Orleans Film Festival Jury awarded “*Five Awake*” the prestigious “Best Louisiana Feature”. The 35-minute documentary had its first Louisiana public screening followed by a panel conversation and reception on October 18, 2016, at the Orpheum Theater. [View the photo gallery here.](#)



Charmaine Caccioppi, Chief Operating Officer of United Way of Southeast Louisiana; Kim Sport, attorney and volunteer public policy chair for United Way of Southeast Louisiana; Mary Claire Landry, Director of the New Orleans Family Justice Center; and Beth Meeks, Executive Director of Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, spearheaded the “United Against Domestic Violence” collaborative. State Rep. Helena Moreno carried four of six legislative bills for the group in the 2014 legislative session.

The six bills led to: 1) increased penalties for domestic abuse, 2) firearm prohibitions for offenders, 3) guidelines for domestic abuse intervention programs, 4) expedited transmission of protective orders to statewide law enforcement database, 5) prohibition of release on recognizance for violation of protective orders, 6) immediate divorce for victims, 7) punitive damages for victims, and 8) the creation of the Domestic Violence Prevention Commission. All five women were appointed to the Commission, with Kim Sport serving as the first chairman, leading to the enactment or revision of over 50 provisions of law regarding domestic violence over a three-year period.

### “Five Awake” screenings, legislative affairs panel discussions, and awards received:

July 11, 2016	Kingsley House Libby Milton Champion for Children Award
October 5, 2016	2016 Public Policy Legislative Champion Reception – The Rampart Room
October 18, 2016	Official “ <i>Five Awake</i> ” Documentary Screening - The Orpheum Theatre
October 27, 2016	Louisiana Women’s Policy & Research Commission Meeting - “ <i>Five Awake</i> ” Screening
November 8, 2016	Harry Connick, Jr. Show – “ <i>Five Awake</i> ” Screening & Panel Discussion in New York
December 8, 2016	New Orleans Family Justice Center – “ <i>Five Awake</i> ” Screening & CLE Training
January 24, 2017	Junior League of New Orleans General Membership Meeting – “ <i>Five Awake</i> ” Screening & Panel Discussion
January 29, 2017	Cinema on the Bayou - Lafayette Film Festival – “ <i>Five Awake</i> ” Screening Acadiana Center for the Arts – Lafayette, LA
February 1, 2017	Louisiana State Law Institute –Domestic Violence Legislation LSU Law School - Baton Rouge, LA
February 7, 2017	Loyola University – Women’s Resource Center - “ <i>Five Awake</i> ” Screening & Panel Discussion

**“Five Awake” screenings, legislative affairs panel discussions, and awards received: (Continued)**

February 14, 2017	Tulane University Law School- Louisiana State Law Institute – “Five Awake” Screening & Panel Discussion
February 16, 2017	CARE Session - The New Orleans Children's Advocacy Center & Audrey Hepburn CARE Center - “Five Awake” Screening & Panel Discussion
March 26, 2017	The Women’s Film Festival of San Diego, Women’s Museum of California – “Five Awake” Screening
March 28, 2017	Harry Connick Jr. - “Five Awake” Aired on FOX 8
April 5, 2017	17th Annual Family Justice Center Conference – “Five Awake” Screening & Panel Discussion Hilton Milwaukee City Center - Milwaukee, WI
April 10, 2017	Tulane University Sexual Assault & Awareness Month– SAPHE & Women in Politics “Five Awake” Screening & Panel Discussion
April 12, 2017	New Orleans Bar Association – Civil District Court - “Five Awake” Screening & Legislative Discussion
April 18, 2017	SART/FJC Prevention Summit 2017 “Steps Towards Prevention: Strategies for Ending Sexual Violence and Dating Abuse Among Teens” – New Orleans, LA – “Five Awake” Screening
April 22, 2017	AAUW LA 2017 State Convention in Baton Rouge, LA – Legislative Panel Discussion
May 17, 2017	Claims Education Conference at Hilton New Orleans Riverside – “Five Awake” Screening
May 21, 2017	Feminist Garden Party, Martine Chaisson Gallery - “Five Awake” Screening
June 15, 2017	Private Screening of the Award Winning Documentary “Five Awake” & Panel Discussion Helen Mills Theater – New York, NY
June 27, 2017	AWHONN Convention - “Five Awake” Screening & Panel Discussion Ernest N. Morial Convention Center



## UWSELA PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

# "Media & Editorials"

2016-2017 United Against Poverty

Fall 2016	Lagniappe Why and How to Advocate: Training JLNO Members to Advocate for the Community <a href="http://www.myneworleans.com/Lagniappe/Fall-2016/Why-and-How-to-Advocate/">http://www.myneworleans.com/Lagniappe/Fall-2016/Why-and-How-to-Advocate/</a>
November 27, 2016	Domestic abuse victims are still being left to fend for themselves in Louisiana <a href="http://www.nola.com/crime/index.ssf/2016/11/domestic_violence_louisiana.html">http://www.nola.com/crime/index.ssf/2016/11/domestic_violence_louisiana.html</a>
December 22, 2016	Letter to the Editor: Sheriff Hilton's actions send wrong message <a href="http://www.kalb.com/content/news/Letter-to-the-Editor-Sheriff-Hiltons-actions-send-wrong-message-407987305.html">http://www.kalb.com/content/news/Letter-to-the-Editor-Sheriff-Hiltons-actions-send-wrong-message-407987305.html</a>
December 27, 2016	Abuse victims deserve protection <a href="http://www.thetowntalk.com/story/opinion/2016/12/27/mail-abuse-victims-deserve-protection/95808486/">http://www.thetowntalk.com/story/opinion/2016/12/27/mail-abuse-victims-deserve-protection/95808486/</a>
January 13, 2017	With domestic abuse offenses, Sen. Troy Brown needs to go: Editorial <a href="http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/01/sen_troy_brown_conviction.html">http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/01/sen_troy_brown_conviction.html</a>
January 25, 2017	Without enforcement, a protective order is merely a piece of paper <a href="http://www.nola.com/crime/index.ssf/2017/01/domestic_violence_murders.html">http://www.nola.com/crime/index.ssf/2017/01/domestic_violence_murders.html</a>
January-February 2017	Louisiana Life Magazine Common Ground - A Louisiana film showcases domestic violence legislation and non-partisan advocacy <a href="http://www.myneworleans.com/Louisiana-Life/January-February-2017/Common-Ground/">http://www.myneworleans.com/Louisiana-Life/January-February-2017/Common-Ground/</a>
February 12, 2017	With Troy Brown refusing to resign, Senate should expel him: Editorial <a href="http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2017/02/troy_brown_expulsion.html">http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2017/02/troy_brown_expulsion.html</a>
February 19, 2017	Dating an abuser is no less dangerous than being married to one ... <a href="http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2017/02/troy_brown_domestic_abuse.html">http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2017/02/troy_brown_domestic_abuse.html</a>
April 5, 2017	Louisiana law should protect dating partners, same-sex abuse victims: Editorial <a href="http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2017/04/domestic_violence_louisiana.html">http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2017/04/domestic_violence_louisiana.html</a>