



2021 PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

“United for A Safe & Prosperous Community”

Ron McClain, Public Policy Chairman

Our [2021 Public Policy Legislative Agenda](#), “United for a Safe & Prosperous Community,” advances our mission to eradicate poverty in Southeast Louisiana by fighting for the most vulnerable among us. A complement to our Blueprint for Prosperity, this agenda serves to address the most pressing health and human service needs in our community and to assist those on the cusp of poverty or [ALICE—Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed](#).

ALICE is a term to describe residents across Louisiana who work hard, yet struggle to make ends meet. ALICE has low-paying jobs, little or no savings, and is one emergency from falling into poverty. We are committed to supporting the needs of the growing ALICE population and, with your support, we can create more equitable communities for us all.

COVID-19 again raised awareness of need, often elevated by the impacts of the pandemic, throughout our communities and state. To ensure an inclusive recovery and a reimagining of our seven-parish region, United Way of Southeast Louisiana champions data-driven policies that address disparities in education, health, financial stability, and community strengthening.

The 2021 Louisiana Legislative Session ended with significant wins for **ALICE!** **Thank you to our 2021 Louisiana Legislative Champions** who supported our efforts in education, financial stability, health, and community strengthening: **Senators** Regina Barrow, Troy Carter, Page Cortez, Cleo Fields, Franklin Foil, Katrina Jackson, Ronnie Johns, Robert Mills, Rogers Pope, and Rick Ward; and **Representatives** Tony Bacala, Rhonda Butler, Barbara Carpenter, Paula Davis, Royce Duplessis, Jonathan Goudeau, Aimee Adatto Freeman, Larry Frieman, Stephanie Hilferty, Jason Hughes, Mike Huval, Ted James, Samuel Jenkins, Frederick Jones, Mandi Landry, Ed Larvadian, Rodney Lyons, Tanner Magee, Joseph Marino, Jack McFarland, Scott McKnight, Patrick McMath, Buddy Mincey, Neil Riser, John Stefanski, Gregory Tarver, Malinda White, and Matthew Willard.

Thank you to our champions who help build stronger communities every day by lending their voices, resources, and time to lift up ALICE families: UWSELA Board of Trustees, Public Policy Committee, Women United, staff, volunteers, and collaborative partners. Your hard work, phone calls, and emails all played a huge part in the success of this legislative session.

Information on all legislation can be viewed on the Louisiana State Legislature’s website:
<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/home.aspx>

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

United Way of Southeast Louisiana secured a major advocacy win for early care and education with the Ready Louisiana Coalition this legislative session: SB 142 (ACT 435) commits 25% of sports betting revenues up to \$20 million to the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund. This funding will provide a dollar-for-dollar match from the state on local investments in early care and education.

The Ready Louisiana Coalition is a bipartisan, statewide group of over 100 businesses, chambers of commerce, advocacy organizations, and early care and education professionals seeking sufficient investment in quality, affordable early care and education in Louisiana.

The Coalition hosted its third annual **Early Ed Day at the Capitol** in June 2021 featuring remarks from Governor John Bel Edwards, State Superintendent of Education Dr. Cade Brumley, and others.

The Coalition also celebrated and honored its **Early Childhood Education (ECE) Champions** on the last day of the state legislative session: Governor John Bel Edwards, Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser, Superintendent Cade Brumley, and Commissioner of Admin. Jay Dardenne; Senators Page Cortez, Cleo Fields, Patrick McMath, Ronnie Johns, and Rick Ward; and Representatives Rick Edmonds, Aimee Freeman, Jonathan Goudeau, Stephanie Hilferty, and Rodney Lyons.

- **ACT 435 (SB 142)** authored by Sen. Rick Ward
GAMING: Provides for the disposition of funds Generated by sports wagering
- **ACT 440 (SB 247)** authored by Sen. Page Cortez
GAMING: Provides relative to the regulation of sports wagering
- **ACT 80 (HB 697)** authored by Rep. John Stefanski
GAMING: Provides for sports wagering



EDUCATION

Federal pandemic relief dollars lessened the pressure on the state budget this session. It allowed the Legislature to make important new investments in education, including a boost to the Go Grants program that will make college more affordable for low-income students and the creation of the M.J. Foster Promise Program to provide workforce training for Louisiana adults.

ACT 31 (HB 461) authored by Rep. Jason Hughes
CHILDREN/CARE: Provides relative to violations by facilities licensed in accordance with the Specialized Provider Licensing Act

ACT 95 (SB 99) authored by Sen. Cleo Fields
TOPS: Provides relative to TOPS eligibility

ACT 108 (SB 216) authored by Sen. Robert Mills
TEACHERS: Requires early literacy professional development for certain teachers

ACT 118 (HB 601) authored by Rep. Jonathan Goudeau
MTR VEHICLE/LICEN PLATES: Creates the pelicans specialty license plate

ACT 198 (HB 304) authored by Rep. Rodney Lyons
EARLY CHILDHOOD: Provides for coordinating data in order to evaluate the early childhood care and education network, prioritizing the provision of related services and funds, and creating a program to provide instructional materials for home use

ACT 230 (HB 368) authored by Rep. Buddy Mincey
CURRICULA: Provides relative to required instruction in elementary and secondary schools on the health risks of vapor products

ACT 366 (HB 322) authored by Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman
STUDENTS: Provides for the sharing of limited student information for the purpose of administering certain federal food assistance programs and for certain postsecondary education purposes

ACT 386 (SB 10) authored by Sen. Cleo Fields

KINDERGARTEN: Provides for mandatory kindergarten attendance and requires compulsory school attendance beginning at age 5

ACT 415 (HB 85) authored by Rep. Scott McKnight

STUDENTS: Creates a literacy program for certain public school students

ACT 417 (HB 119) authored by Rep. Jason Hughes

HIGHER ED/BD REGENTS: Provides relative to the Advisory Council on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

ACT 419 (HB 170) authored by Rep. Joseph Marino

SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS: Provides relative to reporting of students identified as having dyslexia

ACT 429 (SB 27) authored by Sen. Franklin J. Foil

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Provides relative to military and veteran friendly postsecondary education policies

ACT 457 (SB 148) authored by Sen. Patrick Page Cortez

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Establishes the M.J. Foster Promise Program

ACT 473 (HB 411) authored by Rep. Jason Hughes

STUDENT/DISCIPLINE: Provides relative to student discipline

HR 119 authored by Rep. Jason Hughes

STUDENTS: Requests the state Department of Education to re-create a commission to study and make recommendations relative to improving reading proficiency for certain students

SCR 50 authored by Sen. Cleo Fields

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Requests the state Department of Education to identify providers of violence and suicide prevention training that is available at no or low cost

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Legislators took an important step to help women and families afford basic necessities by eliminating the sales tax on diapers and feminine hygiene products, passing the Pregnant Worker Fairness Act to encourage businesses to provide better accommodations for workers who are pregnant, and extending the sunset date on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).



*Our team traveled to the Louisiana State Capitol to support multiple bills that promote equitable communities. Women United members rallied for **HB 7**, which exempts diapers and feminine hygiene products from state sales tax.*

ACT 449 (HB 7) authored by Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman

TAX/SALES-USE-EXEMPT: Provides for a sales and use tax exemption for feminine hygiene products and diapers

Charmaine Caccioppi invited **Meagan Shinker, our Tulane Intern**, to give testimony in the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee Hearing on **SB 49 (Failed)** authored by Sen. Troy Carter, legislation that establishes a state minimum wage and provides that beginning January 1, 2022, the state minimum wage shall be set at \$15 per hour.



Lawmakers introduced several measures to improve conditions for working Louisianans this session, from a study of paid family and medical leave to raising the minimum wage to protections for pregnant workers. These efforts yielded mixed results and the majority of meaningful reforms failed.



UWSELA President & CEO Michael Williamson provided testimony in support of **HB 245, (Failed)** authored by Rep. Barbara Carpenter in House Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations, a measure to promote pay transparency.

ACT 225 (HB 74) authored by Rep. Larry Frieman

INSURERS: Provides relative to the worker's compensation claims office requirement for insurers issuing such policies in Louisiana

ACT 366 (HB 322) authored by Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman

STUDENTS: Provides for the sharing of limited student information for the purpose of administering certain federal food assistance programs

ACT 422 (HB 374) authored by Rep. Royce Duplessis

LESSOR/LESSEE: Provides for residential lessee screening including consumer credit reports and personal hardship statements subsequent to a declared emergency

ACT 453 (HB 678) authored by Rep. Royce Duplessis

TAX CREDITS: Provides for the Louisiana work opportunity tax credit

HEALTH

United Way of Southeast Louisiana believes that all Louisianians should have access to equitable health services that protect and improve health and well-being.

ACT 73 (HB 397) authored by Rep. Malinda White

PUBLIC HEALTH: Provides relative to public health programs and services related to Alzheimer's disease and other dementias

ACT 92 (SB 93) authored by Sen. J. Rogers Pope

HEALTH DEPARTMENT: Provides relative to telehealth services provided by licensed hearing aid dealers.

ACT 182 (HB 190) authored by Rep. Matthew Willard

INSURANCE/HEALTH: Provides relative to maternity services of midwives and doulas

ACT 210 (SB 133) authored by Sen. Regina Barrow

HEALTH DEPARTMENT: Provides relative to the prioritization of health equity by the Louisiana Department of Health

ACT 305 (HB 316) authored by Rep. Paula Davis

CHILDREN/NEWBORNS: Adds mucopolysaccharidosis type I and glycogen storage disorder type II to the state's newborn screening panel

ACT 321 (HB 460) authored by Rep. Paul Hollis

HEALTH/LDH: Establishes the Rare Disease Advisory Council within the Louisiana Department of Health

ACT 329 (HB 589) authored by Rep. Royce Duplessis

MENTAL HEALTH: Provides relative to civil involuntary outpatient treatment for persons suffering from mental illness

ACT 353 (SB 211) authored by Sen. Katrina Jackson

TEACHERS: Requires in-service training for teachers and certain other school personnel on adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed education

ACT 388 (SB 150) authored by Sen. Regina Barrow

GROUP BENEFITS PROGRAM: Requires the Office of Group Benefits to cover bariatric surgery techniques for the treatment of severe obesity

ACT 393 (SB 215) authored by Sen. Regina Barrow

DISCRIMINATION: Provides for the reasonable accommodations of employees who become temporarily disabled due to certain medical conditions

ACT 450 (HB 172) authored by Rep. Rhonda Butler

MEDICAID: Provides for Medicaid coverage of dental care for certain adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities

ACT 467 (HB 146) authored by Rep. Stephanie Hilferty

TAX CREDITS: Establishes an income tax credit following the delivery of a stillborn child

ACT 470 (HB 301) authored by Rep. Mandi Landry

TAX/INCOME TAX: Establishes an income tax credit for certain funeral and burial expenses for certain pregnancy-related deaths

HCR 56 by Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman

HEALTH/CHILDREN: Requests that the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education study health and safety best practices for use of school-issued digital devices

HCR 103 authored by Rep. Royce Duplessis

MENTAL HEALTH: Requests that certain state agencies address the impacts of maternal depression and anxiety and provide evidence-based preventive care, early identification, and treatment services

HCR 105 authored by Rep. Royce Duplessis

MENTAL HEALTH: Establishes the Louisiana Maternal Mental Health Task Force for the purposes of advancing education and treatment and improving services relating to maternal mental health

HR 118 authored by Rep. Barbara Carpenter

LABOR: Creates a task force to study implementing a paid family and medical leave program in the state

HR 193 authored by Rep. Mandie Landry

MEDICAID: Requests La. Dept. of Health to amend the Medicaid state plan to allow for postpartum Medicaid coverage for 12 months after childbirth for certain pregnant individuals

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Legislators passed new bills to protect renters during this legislative session including HB 375 by Rep. Freeman which will ensure survivors of sexual assault can end their leases early and without penalty so they don't have to re-live their assault or feel unsafe in their home. Another new bill, HB 55 by Rep. Freeman, will allow a domestic violence survivor to affirm their own signature rather than needing an affidavit to get a protective order.

ACT 207 (SB 113) authored by Sen. Gregory Tarver

CIVIL PROCEDURE: Provides relative to the payment of fees for interpreters for non-English-speaking persons in civil cases

ACT 320 (HB 452) authored by Rep. Paula Davis

DOMESTIC ABUSE: Creates a domestic violence fatality review team within the Louisiana Department of Health



ACT 394 (HB 55) authored by Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman

DOMESTIC ABUSE: Provides relative to protective orders. Removes the notarization requirement on temporary restraining order petitions when the petitioner is seeking relief from domestic abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ACT 352 (SB 170) authored by Sen. Ronnie Johns

GOVERNOR: Provides relative to the creation of the office of human trafficking prevention

SEXUAL ASSAULT

ACT 1 (HB 375) authored by Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman

LEASES: Provides relative to sexual assault victims as parties to certain residential lease agreements

ACT 3 (HB 12) authored by Rep. Malinda B. White

TAX/INCOME TAX: Creates an individual income tax checkoff for the Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response

ACT 186 (HB 222) authored by Rep. John Stefanski

CRIME/SEX OFFENSES: Provides relative to certain sex offenses against minors

ACT 188 (HB 234) authored by Rep. Barbara Carpenter

CRIMINAL/JUSTICE: Provides relative to the Louisiana Sexual Assault Oversight Commission

ACT 322 (HB 492) authored by Rep. Jason Hughes

LIABILITY/CIVIL: Provides relative to the prescriptive period for certain actions for abuse of a minor

ACT 439 (SB 230) authored by Sen. Beth Mizell

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Provides relative to power-based violence on college and university campuses

ACT 441 (SB 232) authored by Sen. Regina Barrow

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Establishes and provides for the Power-Based Violence Review

ACT 447 (HB 394) authored by Rep. Neil Riser

HIGHER EDUCATION: Provides for mandatory reporting of sexual misconduct at postsecondary education institutions and requires such institutions to post reports relative to campus security policies and campus crime statistics on their websites

ACT 472 (HB 409) authored by Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman

HIGHER EDUCATION: Provides relative to campus safety and accountability

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING

United Way fights for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community. We work in strong collaborative partnership with Smart on Crime (SOC), the Louisiana Youth Justice Coalition (LYJC), Louisiana Budget Project (LBP), Power Coalition, and Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI) to address criminal justice reform and strengthen community policing standards in Louisiana.

ACT 22 (HB 285) authored by Rep. Ted James

VOTERS/VOTING: Provides relative to the amount a time a person may remain in a voting machine

ACT 365 (HB 286) authored by Rep. Frederick D. Jones

VOTERS/VOTING: Extends the period for early voting prior to election day

ACT 422 (HB 374) authored by Rep. Royce Duplessis

LESSOR/LESSEE: Provides relative to residential lease applications

ACT 430 (SB 34) authored by Sen. Cleo Fields

LAW ENFORCEMENT: Provides for responsibilities of law enforcement officers while interacting with the public



ACT 451 (HB 430) authored by Rep. Ted James

LAW ENFORCE/OFFICERS: Provides relative to the officer's bill of rights

ACT 454 (HB 680) authored by Rep. Jason Hughes

TAX CREDITS: Establishes the Louisiana Youth Jobs Tax Credit Program

ACT 460 (HB 707) authored by Rep. Matthew Willard

EMPLOYMENT: Provides relative to employment discrimination and creates the Fair Chance Hiring Act

HCR 84 authored by Rep. Ted James

LAW ENFORCE/OFFICERS: Requests the State Police Commission to adopt policies that reflect legislation recommended by the Police Training, Screening, and De-escalation Task Force

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

ACT 61 (HB 77) authored by Rep. Joseph Marino

PROBATION: Provides relative to the suspension or deferral of sentence and probation in felony cases

ACT 123 (HB 216) authored by Rep. Royce Duplessis

CHILDREN: Provides relative to the imposition of court costs in proceedings involving children

ACT 124 (HB 232) authored by Rep. Joseph Marino

CRIMINAL/SENTENCING: Provides relative to discharge and dismissals of prosecutions for misdemeanor convictions

ACT 125 (HB 248) authored by Rep. Ted James

CORRECTIONS: Decreases probation and parole fees for certain offenders

ACT 126 (HB 325) authored by Rep. Ed Larvadian

CRIMINAL/PROCEDURE: Provides with respect to the procedure of arrest of persons with minor or dependent children

ACT 127 (HB 378) authored by Rep. Samuel Jenkins

VOTERS/VOTING: Provides relative to registration and voting by a person with a felony conviction

ACT 197 (HB 303) authored by Rep. Rodney Lyons

BAIL: Provides relative to constructive surrender and non-warrant surrender

ACT 252 (HB 46) authored by Rep. Ted James

CRIMINAL/JUSTICE: Provides relative to certain pretrial procedures

ACT 257 (HB 92) authored by Rep. Joseph Marino

CRIMINAL/PROCEDURE: Increases the amount paid for a person who has been wrongfully convicted

ACT 271 (HB 106) authored by Rep. Barbara Carpenter

CRIMINAL/SENTENCING: Provides relative to pleas of guilty or nolo contendere in felony cases

ACT 313 (HB 288) authored by Rep. Tanner Magee

CRIMINAL/PENALTIES: Provides relative to the effective date of certain provisions regarding the financial obligations of criminal offenders

HCR 85 authored by Rep. Mandie Landry

CORRECTIONS/PRISONERS: Requests a study of policies relative to certain health issues of women prisoners.

HCR 101 authored by Rep. Ted James

CRIMINAL/SENTENCING: Creates a commission to study the procedures for processing felony sentences and calculating incarceration release dates of persons in the custody of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

FOSTER CARE

ACT 6 (HB 37) authored by Rep. Tony Bacala

ADOPTION: Provides for uniform post-placement functions associated with agency adoptions and private adoptions

ACT 350 (SB 143) authored by Sen. Patrick McMath

CHILDREN: Provides relative to permanent placement of children in custody of the state

ACT 351 (SB 151) authored by Sen. Regina Barrow

CHILDREN: Enacts the Foster Youth's Bill of Rights for youth ages fourteen through eighteen in foster care

ACT 378 (HB 424) authored by Rep. Jack McFarland

TAX/INCOME TAX: Establishes an individual income tax deduction for taxpayers who adopt a child from foster care

ACT 421 (HB 218) authored by Rep. Mike Huval

CHILDREN/NEWBORNS: Authorizes the installation and use of newborn safety devices at infant relinquishment sites designated in the Safe Haven Law

2021 Educational Sessions:

To ensure an inclusive recovery and a reimagining of our 7-parish region area, United Way of Southeast Louisiana championed data-driven policies that addressed disparities in education, health, financial stability and community strengthening. View links to our Public Policy Educational Sessions below:

- **Educational Session #1: ALICE Families** –View a recording of the session [here](#)
- **Educational Session #2: Education & Health** – View a recording of the session [here](#).
- **Educational Session #3: Financial Stability** – View a recording of the session [here](#).
- **Educational Session #4: Community Strengthening** – View a recording of the session [here](#).

The following reports include research of all issues the Public Policy Committee is advocating for in this 2021 Regular Legislative Session:

- **Ready Louisiana**
<https://www.readylouisiana.org/ready-la-2021-session>
- **Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board (CCAB)**
https://www.unitedwaysela.org/sites/unitedwaysela.org/files/CCAB_MasterPresentation_CCDec2020_Final.pdf
- **Louisiana Women’s Policy & Research Commission (LWPRC)**
https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/Programs/StatusOfWomenInLouisiana_Edition1_OnlineVersion.pdf
- **Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV)**
<https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/2020DVPCReport.pdf>
- **Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services**
http://www.dcf.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/searchable/Reports/DCFS_2021_factsheet_state_regions.pdf
- **Louisiana Domestic Violence Prevention Commission**
<https://www.unitedwaysela.org/sites/unitedwaysela.org/files/DVPC%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf>
- **Louisiana Policy Institute for Children**
https://0cd902dd-9de1-4dae-8781-4a355ebda8df.filesusr.com/ugd/43cca3_302b55ec20b1430db31c0b973d62bdeb.pdf

ELLEVATE LOUISIANA

- **Louisiana Tax Reform and the 2021 Fiscal Session - Engage Videocast with Sen. Bret Allain**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qThp8jSzlFo>
- **Ellevate Louisiana & Julie Stokes**
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbkZIRXCRxBhFijhlaBIAjA>

LOUISIANA BUDGET PROJECT (LBP)

- **Louisiana Budget Project - Louisiana Needs A Strong Families Tax Credit**
<https://www.labudget.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Louisiana-needs-a-strong-families-tax-credit.pdf>
- **Thinking Clearly About Louisiana Tax Policy**
<https://www.labudget.org/2021/01/thinking-clearly-about-louisiana-tax-policy/>
- **New College Student SNAP Access**
<https://www.labudget.org/2021/01/new-college-student-snap-access/>
(LBP is working in close partnership with the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus on this issue)
- **2021 Louisiana Legislative Session Review**
<https://www.labudget.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/LBP-Session-Wrap-up-Report-2021-2.pdf>