The Louisiana Legislature convened an Extraordinary Session in January 2023 to address insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon's request to allocate $45 million into a newly-created incentive fund to attract insurance firms to Louisiana. The Legislature passed ACT 1 (HB 1) and ACT 2 (HB 2) during the special session, which concluded on February 3, 2023.

**ACT 1 (HB1)** by Rep. Jerome Zeringue (R-Houma) - appropriates $45 million in funding for the Insure Louisiana Incentive Program to incentivize insurance companies to write policies in Louisiana.

**ACT 2 (HB2)** by Rep. John Stefanski (R-Crowley) - restricts the use of funding for the Insure Louisiana Incentive Program. Under HB2, no insurance provider that filed bankruptcy or was declared insolvent will be eligible to receive the financial incentives.

The 2023 Regular Legislative Session convened April 10, 2023, with final adjournment no later than 6:00 p.m. on June 8, 2023.

The United Way of Southeast Louisiana Public Policy 2023 State Legislative Agenda, United for a Safe and Prosperous Community, will continue to advance our fight to eradicate poverty in Southeast Louisiana through the Blueprint for Prosperity and support ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households. ALICE represents the growing number of hardworking individuals and families across our state who are employed but unable to afford the basic household necessities (including housing, child care, health care, food, and transportation) that undergird economic stability. According to the United Way ALICE Report, over half of households in our state are living in poverty or struggling to make ends meet, a reality whose implications have become more apparent following the coronavirus pandemic and recent major weather events.

UWSELA Public Policy coordinated with our Community Impact staff to ensure issues resonating in our community and affecting ALICE families were included in this agenda. Our agenda was also informed by the needs highlighted by residents in each of the seven parishes we serve (Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington) in our Community Conversations series and is responsive to the challenges most pressing to our communities.

**EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS**

UWSELA Public Policy Committee met prior to the start of the session to prepare our State Legislative Agenda. This year we held four Educational Sessions to help engage our collaborative partners and our funders, which included subject matter experts who shared their knowledge to assist us in creating a robust 2023 State Legislative Agenda. Mary Ambrose, UWSELA Chief Equity & Impact Officer, kicked off each educational session with the following DEI question:
“So often policies are created without community input, causing harm, especially to the same communities they are intended to help. How are you ensuring you are putting people first – focusing on real people’s problems and experiences to uncover and address systemic inequities?”

Click here to view a recording of all Educational Sessions in this series.

The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (LPIC), in partnership with United Way of Southeast Louisiana (UWSELA), held a press conference at the Louisiana State Capitol to release a report, funded with support from Entergy Corporation, “A Modern History of Early Care and Education in Louisiana,” which analyzes the modern history of early care and education (ECE) in legislation and funding from the turn of the 21st century through 2022, including lessons learned.

Early Education Day at the Capitol will take place on Monday, May 1, 2023. United Way of Southeast Louisiana, the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, and the entire Ready Louisiana Coalition will educate policymakers about the importance of improving policies and increasing investment for quality early care and education for children birth through age four in Louisiana.

EDUCATION

UWSELA advocates for governmental action in the wide range of supports necessary for young people to pursue meaningful and fulfilling futures, including: early childhood and K-12 educational policies, protecting the rights and well-being of students, and investment in educational professionals to enhance student achievement and well-being.

- Early Childhood Education (ECE) (Ages 0-3)
- Increase Investment in Ages 4-Pre-K, K-12 Schools, and Higher Education

The Ready Louisiana Coalition, which UWSELA helps lead, secured a historic $84 million down payment for Louisiana’s children last year, but our work is not done! Our Coalition’s ask of the Legislature this year is as follows:

HB 1 provides for the ordinary operating expenses of state government.

- Appropriate $315 million–$200 million to maintain child care access for 16,000 children as a result of expiring one-time federal funds and $115 million to expand access to high-quality early care and education for over 9,000 in-need children, as recommended by the bipartisan Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Commission; and
- Continue to incentivize cities and parishes to invest local dollars to expand high-quality early care and education seats through new revenue sources and appropriating 10% of recognized excess revenues to the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund.

HB 9 by Rep. Rhonda Butler

SCHOOLS/CHOICE: Creates and provides for a program to provide state funding for the education of students with exceptionalities not enrolled in public school.


STUDENTS: Prohibits promotion to the fourth grade of certain students whose reading deficiencies have not been remedied by the end of the third grade.

HB 69 by Rep. Joseph Marino

STUDENTS: Provides for the screening and diagnosis of students with respect to dyslexia.
HB 72 by Rep. Ken Brass  
**COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES:** Provides relative to the designation of military and veteran friendly campuses.

HB 98 by Rep. Lance Harris  
**SCHOOLS/CHOICE:** Creates and provides for a program to provide state funding for the education of students not enrolled in public school and expands the ability of parents to enroll children in the public school of their choice.

HB 103 by Nicholas Muscarello  
**CURRICULA:** Adds Financial Literacy as a required course for high school students.

HB 118 by Rep. John Illg  
**CURRICULA:** Requires one semester of instruction in personal financial management as a prerequisite to high school graduation.

HB 167 by Rep. Kenny Cox  
**STUDENT/TUITION:** Provides for a tuition waiver for certain disabled veterans.

HB 191 by Rep. Patrick Jefferson  
**TEACHERS/CERTIFICATION:** Provides relative to teacher certification.

HB 242 by Rep. Stephanie Hilferty  
**STUDENT/DISCIPLINE:** Provides relative to corporal punishment in elementary and secondary schools.

HB 282 by Rep. Kyle Green  
**SCHOOLS/FOOD PROGRAMS:** Requires free school breakfast and lunch for certain students.

HB 338 by Rep. Barbara Freiberg  
**EARLY CHILDHOOD:** Provides relative to the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission.

HB 381 by Rep. Vanessa LaFleur  
**TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS:** Creates the Affordable Digital Textbook and Learning Materials Subscription Pilot Program.

HB 412 by Rep. Malinda White  
**EARLY CHILDHOOD:** Establishes a program to be administered by the La. Educational Television Authority for the purpose of encouraging reading for young children and creates a fund within the state treasury for the purpose of funding the program.

HCR 5 by Rep. Michael Echols  
**HIGHER EDUCATION:** Requests that the Board of Regents conduct a study relative to the state's articulation and transfer process with respect to career and technical education courses.
HCR 17 by Rep. Buddy Mincey
TEACHERS: Continues the Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force.

SB 204 by Sen. Sharon Hewitt
POSTSECONDARY ED: Provides relative to the M.J. Foster Promise Award program. (gov sig)

SB 207 by Sen. Barry Milligan
SCHOOLS: Creates the School Safety Act of 2023. (gov sig)

SCR 2 by Sen. Cleo Fields
BESE: Provides for legislative approval of the MFP formula for the 2023-2024 school year.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

UWSELA encourages increased governmental support for evidence-based programs and policies that undergird economic stability and financial empowerment for all, including: workforce development, pay transparency, emergency assistance, and the establishment of a living wage. We will continue to monitor legislation that may hinder positions we have taken in the past that will further negatively impact our ALICE community.

- Workforce Development
- Establishment of a Living Wage
- Elimination of Pay Secrecy
- Monitor Predatory Lending

HB 162 by Matthew Willard
TAX CREDITS: Increases the amount of the earned income tax credit.

HB 283 by Rep. Vanessa LaFleur
LABOR: Provides relative to employment practices related to wage history, wage disclosure, and retaliation.

HB 374 by Rep. Ed Larvadain
EMPLOYMENT/WAGES-MINIMUM: Establishes a state minimum wage rate.

HR 3 by Rep. Matthew Willard
SPECIAL DAY/WEEK/MONTH: Designates April 25, 2023, as Step Up Louisiana Day at the state capitol.

SB 93 by Sen. Joseph Bouie
EMPLOYMENT: Requires that any contractor who enters into a contract with a public entity comply with the Louisiana Equal Pay for Women Act. (8/1/23)

SB 148 by Sen. Gary Carter
EMPLOYMENT: Provides relative to employment practices related to wage history, wage disclosure, and retaliation.
SB 149 by Sen. Gary Carter
EMPLOYMENT: Provides relative to the state minimum wage. (gov sig)

HEALTH
Inspiring governmental action to ensure that all Louisianans have access to equitable health services that protect and improve mental and physical well-being, including: trauma-informed care, mental health services, paid family leave, Medicaid, maternal child health, services for sexual assault survivors, and human trafficking prevention.

- Trauma Informed Care/ACEs
- Mental Health Services
- Paid Family Leave
- Domestic Violence
- Human Trafficking
- Sexual Assault
- Maternal Child Health
- Medical

HB 21 by Rep. Joe Stagni
SCHOOLS/EMPLOYEES: Provides relative to extended leave for school bus operators and public school employees.

HB 117 by Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman
SCHOOLS: Requires the provision of free menstrual products in easily accessible locations.

HB 175 by Rep. Delisha Boyd
WEAPONS/FIREARMS: Prohibits the carrying of firearms into hospitals, mental health facilities, or community health centers with exceptions for employees with concealed handgun permits and security officers.

HB 200 by Rep. LaFleur
CHILDREN/NEWBORNS: Provides relative to newborn screening for certain genetic conditions.

HB 272 by Rep. Matthew Willard
INSURANCE/HEALTH: Provides relative to maternity support services of doulas.

HB 596 by Rep. Aimee Adatto Freeman
EMPLOYMENT: Creates the Louisiana Family and Medical Leave Benefits Act.

HCR 16 by Rep. Barbara Carpenter
SPECIAL DAY/WEEK/MONTH: Recognizes April 11-17, 2023, as Black Maternal Health Week in the state.

HR 4 by Rep. Candace Newell
SPECIAL DAY/WEEK/MONTH: Recognizes the week of April 11 through 17, 2023, as Black Maternal Health Week.

SB 12 by Sen. Cleo Fields
PUBLIC HEALTH: Requires an automated external defibrillator on the premises of all educational institutions and at sponsored athletic events. (gov sig).
SB 41 by Sen. Beth Mizell
TAX/TAXATION: Establishes a tax credit for certain maternal wellness centers. (1/1/24)

SB 66 by Sen. Fred Mills
HEALTH CARE: Provides relative to telehealth services. (1/1/24)

SB 135 by Sen. Regina Barrow
MEDICAID: Provides relative to Medicaid reimbursement for services provided by a licensed midwife. (8/1/23)

SB 137 by Sen. Regina Barrow
CHILDREN: Creates the Office of Child Advocacy and the state child advocate. (8/1/23)

SB 200 by Sen. Royce Duplessis
EMPLOYMENT: Provides that retaliation against an employee for an absence from work due to genetic testing or a medically necessary cancer screening shall be an unlawful employment practice. (8/1/23)

SB 88 by Stewart Cathey
TAX EXEMPTIONS: Establishes an employer supported maternal healthcare tax credit. (gov sig)

SR 19 by Sen. Royce Duplessis
LEGIS POWERS/FUNCTIONS: Designates the week of April 11-17, 2023, as Black Maternal Health Week.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING
UWSELA will continue championing policies that increase equity and eliminate barriers to opportunity for vulnerable individuals and families, including: access to affordable housing, protection from insurance exploitation, and prevention of discriminatory and exclusionary practices.

- Louisiana Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (LAPRI)
- Affordable Housing

HB 40 by Rep. Delisha Boyd
EMPLOYMENT/DISCRIMINATN: Provides relative to employment discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

HB 180 by Rep. Matthew Willard
HOUSING: Provides relative to housing opportunities.

HB 211 by Rep. Edmond Jordan
CONSTITUTION/AMENDMENT: (Constitutional Amendment) Prohibits slavery and involuntary servitude.
HB 247 by Rep. Mandie Landry
TAX/INCOME-INDIV/ CREDIT: Establishes a tax credit for purchases of firearm safety devices.

HB 348 by Rep. Samuel Jenkins
SCHOOLS: Provides relative to school safety.

HB 426 Rep. Bryant
TAX CREDITS: Provides relative to the work opportunity tax credit for businesses that hire certain formerly incarcerated persons.

HB 449 by Rep. Matthew Willard
VOTERS/VOTING: Provides relative to the rights of voters with disabilities.

HB 506 by Rep. Daryl Adams
HOUSING: Creates the Louisiana Interagency Council on Homelessness within the office of the governor.

HR 7 by Rep. Denise Marcelle
PUBLIC SFTY/ CORRECTIONS: Directs the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to permit incarcerated parents to virtually attend certain ceremonies involving their children.

SB 111 by Sen. Royce Duplessis
CRIMINAL RECORDS: Provides relative to the expungement of criminal records. (8/1/23)

SB 156 by Sen. Royce Duplessis
INSURANCE POLICIES: Provides that no property insurance policy shall prohibit an insured from hiring a public adjuster.

SB 195 by Sen. Royce Duplessis
TAX/INCOME/P ERSONAL: Establishes an individual income tax credit for payments made toward a homeowner’s insurance deductible for certain losses. (1/1/24)

SB 200 by Sen. Royce Duplessis
EMPLOYMENT: Provides that retaliation against an employee for an absence from work due to genetic testing or a medically necessary cancer screening shall be an unlawful employment practice. (8/1/23)

SB 202 by Sen. Regina Barrow
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Provides relative to campus accountability and safety. (gov sig)
SB 216 by Sen. Gary Carter
LIABILITY: Provides for liability for damages caused by a firearm stolen from a vehicle and used in the commission of a felony. (8/1/23)

SB 212 by Sen. Royce Duplessis
WEAPONS: Provides for the seizure of firearms from persons who pose a risk of imminent injury to self or others. (8/1/23)

SB 213 by Sen. Royce Duplessis
PUBLIC RECORDS: Provides relative to the costs for public records. (8/1/23)

SCR 7 by Sen. Kirk Talbot
PROPERTY INSURANCE: Urges the commissioner of insurance to create the Hurricane Mitigation Commission to study and report findings and recommendations relative to the handling of property insurance claims in the wake of hurricanes and the necessity of a catastrophe savings account.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
UWSELA promotes and campaign for policies and procedures that protect and support survivors of domestic violence, including: increased access to shelter and emergency services, increased protections for survivors, domestic violence training for system actors, intervention programs for perpetrators, and awareness-building efforts.

- Access to Shelter Services
- Protection for Survivors
- Training for Comprehensive System Integrations
- Housing

HB 217 by Rep. Vanessa LaFleur
COURTS: Provides relative to commissioners of the Nineteenth Judicial District Court (OR +$456,800 LF EX See Note)

HB 376 by Rep. Delisha Boyd
DOMESTIC ABUSE: Provides relative to protective orders.

SB 31 by Sen. Beth Mizell
CRIMINAL JUSTICE: Creates database to track trafficking arrests, convictions, restitution, fines, and civil asset forfeiture. (8/1/23) (OR NO IMPACT See Note)

SB 169 by Sen. Beth Mizell
EVIDENCE: Provides for tracking rape kits from collection through conviction. (8/1/23)

SB 208 by Sen. Kirk Talbot
INSURANCE COMMISSIONER: Provides for appointment of the commissioner of insurance. (2/3-CA4s(20)) (gov sig)
SB 215 by Sen. Regina Barrow  
CRIME/PUNISHMENT: Provides justification defense to domestic violence victim-defendants. (8/1/23)

SR 4 by Sen. Beth Mizell  
CRIME/PUNISHMENT: Recreates the Task Force on Human Trafficking Arrests.

SR 5 by Sen. Franklin Foil  
CRIMINAL PROCEDURE: Creates the Protective Order Procedure and Records Task Force.

**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Support the development of policies that provide comprehensive, holistic supports to young people to ensure they can pursue stable, healthy, meaningful futures, including: the provision of high-quality extracurricular, cultural, and recreational services, leadership support programming, and safe neighborhoods for youth.

- Workforce Training  
- Afterschool Programs  
- Recreational Enrichment  
- Leadership Training

HB 78 by Rep. Jason Hughes  
SCHOOLS: Provides relative to school facilities preservation and systemwide needs programs in certain school districts.

HB 282 by Rep. Kyle Green  
SCHOOLS/FOOD PROGRAMS: Requires free school breakfast and lunch for certain students.

HB 298 by Rep. Jason Hughes  
CHILDREN/PARENTAL RIGHTS: Provides relative to parental rights in certain circumstances.

HB 316 by Rep. Tammy Phelps  
VOTING/REGISTRATION: Provides for Louisiana High School Seniors Voter Registration Day.

HB 353 by Rep. Denise Marcelle  
STUDENTS: Provides relative to student behavior, discipline, and behavioral and mental health.

HB 490 by Rep. Rodney Lyons  
VOTING/REGISTRATION: Provides for procedures and guidance regarding voter registration activities.

HB 561 by Rep. Clay Schexnayder  
AGRICULTURE: Provides relative to the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center.
SB 137 by Sen. Regina Barrow
CHILDREN: Creates the Office of Child Advocacy and the state child advocate. (8/1/23)

SB 150 by Sen. Robert Mills
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Creates the Louisiana Literacy Advisory Commission. (gov sig)

SB 207 by Sen. Barry Milligan
SCHOOLS: Creates the School Safety Act of 2023. (gov sig)

The following reports include research of all issues the Public Policy Committee is advocating for in this 2023 Legislative Session:


Ellevate Louisiana – Pending Final Approval of Legislative Priorities

Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families
• Geaux Far Louisiana Strategic Plan 2023-2028 Overview – https://www.geauxfarla.org/
  https://static1.squarespace.com/static/624f4a58f8c4ee7e640c8d03/t/6369c42b9055480b6c812034/1667875886527/GFL_Executive_10_24_Final.pdf
• Geaux Far Additional Fact Sheet: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/624f4a58f8c4ee7e640c8d03/t/6369c42b9055480b6c812034/1667875886527/GFL_Executive_10_24_Final.pdf

Louisiana Budget Project
• Medicaid works. Let’s keep it strong - https://www.labudget.org/2023/04/medicaid-works-lets-keep-it-strong/
• LBP Statement on Governor’s Executive Budget - https://www.labudget.org/2023/02/lbp-statement-on-governors-executive-budget/
• LBP Paid Family Medical Leave - https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:8d4b30f5-e080-34c4-adb5-235ac5b3ebf4

Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence
https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:c56e021c-c5da-35ef-ae3b-c563c56f0e41

Louisiana Policy & Research Commission 2022 Annual Report
https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:8d4b30f5-e080-34c4-adb5-235ac5b3ebf4

Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI)
https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:c9c6a7b2-84ee-3732-8448-23b9daaf0d0b

Whole Health Louisiana
https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-PHCH/FamilyHealth/WholeHealthLouisiana_November2022Convening_Summary.pdf