

2026 LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

United Way SELA
Public Policy Committee

UNITED WAY
Southeast Louisiana

UWSELA Public Policy Committee

2026 LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

United for a Safe & Prosperous Community

United Way of Southeast Louisiana Public Policy 2026 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.

UWSELA Public Policy 2026 State Legislative Agenda, aligns with our Bold Goal–getting 100,000 **ALICE** (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) individuals on the pathway to prosperity by 2035.

UWSELA Public Policy met with the Community Impact team to review input received from our funded agencies on public policy issues impacting our region.

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Our UWSELA Public Policy committee meets each year before the start of the session to prepare our annual policy priorities. We held two educational sessions this year to help engage our collaborative partners and funders, which included subject matter experts to assist us in creating robust priorities.
View the recordings:

SESSION #1:
Community Resiliency, Youth Opportunity, Healthy Community, and Financial Security

SESSION #2:
Louisiana Executive & State Budget Priorities for FY 26/27

For additional information, please refer to the House Services Session Wrap-Up.



Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer
Public Policy Chairman

2026 REGULAR LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2026 Regular Legislative Session convened March 9 and adjourned June 1. The number of instruments filed totaled 2,614 instruments: 1,748 House Bills and 825 Senate Bills. The Louisiana Legislature passed more than 900 Bills.

Throughout the Session UWSELA tracked legislation, helped draft legislation working with key legislative bureau staff, engaged with statewide collaborative partners, and advocated for policies that aligned with our ALICE agenda and our mission to eliminate poverty.

Historical debates occurred in redistricting, and elections, with Louisiana's new closed primary system in play, and voters rejecting all five constitutional amendments on the ballot.

This 2026 Louisiana Regular Legislative Session was focused on the redistricting of congressional maps. In a major ruling (Louisiana v. Callais), the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Louisiana's congressional map, ruling 6-3 along ideological lines that the state's map – which included two majority-Black districts – was an unconstitutional racial gerrymander.
After the Supreme Court's Louisiana vs Callais decision release caused Governor Landry to issue an Executive Order 26-038 suspending U.S. House Primary elections.This kicked off redistricting as a primary focus and **ACT 2 (SB 121)** (Rep. Jay Morris) CONGRESS: Favoring Republicans at a 5-1 advantage, ultimately being adopted, passing the Senate 27-10 and the House 66-36.

A major disappointment for our UWSELA and collaborative partners was the failure of our **HB 586** WEAPONS/FIREARMS: Authored by Rep. Vincent Cox, protecting children and reducing unintentional shooting injuries and deaths by preventing minors from gaining access to loaded, unsecured firearms. **https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:e06b675c-16c9-4398-8fd7-9469478bcce9**





This session includes the following accomplishments done in partnership with United Way of Southeast Louisiana statewide collaborative partners:

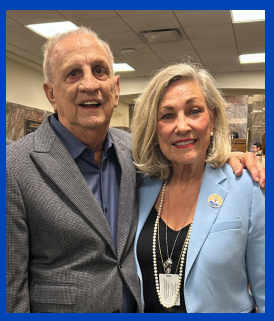


ACT 3 (HB 1) (Rep. Jack McFarland) APPROPRIATIONS: provides for the ordinary operating expenses of state government for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. The Louisiana House Appropriations Committee advanced a $47 billion state budget, led by Chairman, Rep. Jack McFarland, focused on fiscal responsibility, education, and economic growth, all without raising taxes.

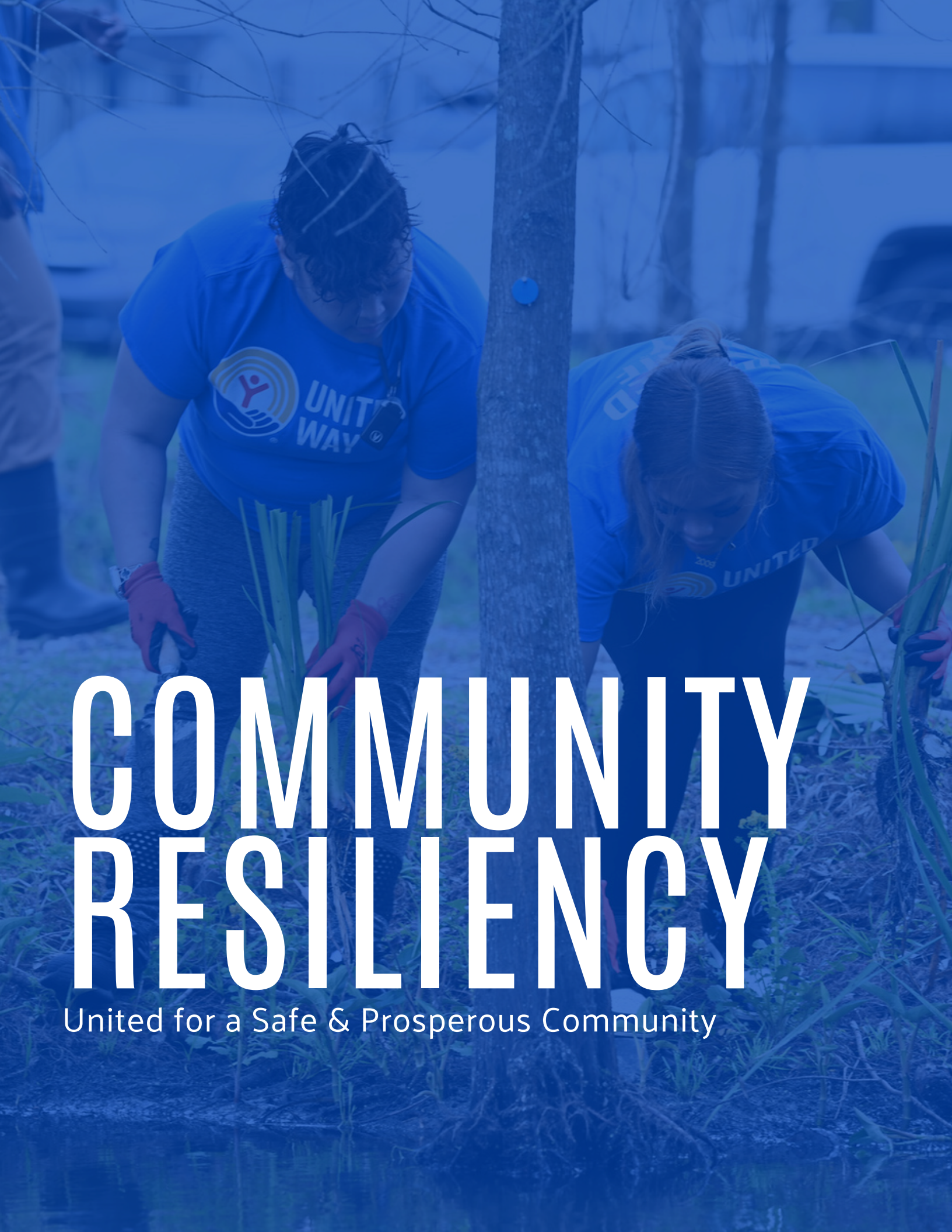


Key Highlights include: $47B State Budget for 2026-2027

- $5.3B to K-12 Education ($4B) and Higher Education ($1.3B) fully funds the K-12 education funding formula
- $420M Investments in Early Childhood Education, $78M maintained in CCAP
- $500M in road infrastructure improvements, beyond Capital Outlay Bill
- $360M in Economic Development initiatives to attract private jobs
  - Investment, including incentives for higher wages, site readiness funding
- $144M payment to LASERS, to pay down additional state retirement debt
- $33M for rate increases for Medicaid Home and Community-based services for disabled individuals
- $900,000 for State Imagination Library
- $50M Fortified Roofs
- $150,000 to UWSELA for Tangipahoa Parish Services
- $7M in DV Services and $8M in core/TANF at the discretion of DCFS
  - We failed to secure the $200,000 for Domestic Abuse Fatality Review Panel and the additional $3.5M to backfill loss in Federal Funding.







COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

United for a Safe & Prosperous Community



UWSELA prioritized governmental actions that ensure opportunity for all individuals and families, especially those living under the ALICE Threshold, and foster stronger, more resilient communities, including pathways to affordable housing, protection from insurance exploitation, prevention of discriminatory and exclusionary practices, and support for domestic violence protections, programs, and awareness-building efforts.

ACT 785 (HB 167) **(Rep. Barbara Freiberg)**
PUBLIC SFTY/CORRECTIONS: Provides for the issuance of certain documentation and certification to inmates before their release from incarceration.

ACT 290 (HB 168) **(Rep. Barbara Freiberg)**
CORRECTIONS: Creates a transitional reentry program for female parolees.

ACT 68 (HB 334) **(Rep. Raymond Crews)**
SUNSET LAW: Re-creates Louisiana Works and re-authorizes the Incumbent Worker Training Program.

ACT 805 (HB 457) **(Rep. Alonzo Knox)**
HOMELESS: Establishes minimum housing standards for individuals experiencing homelessness.

ACT 663 (HB 656) **(Rep. Marcus Bryant)**
CORRECTIONS: Creates a pilot program that provides certain DPS&C programming and services to inmates.

ACT 819 (HB 616) **(Rep. Alonzo Knox)**
MENTAL HEALTH: Provides for oversight of publicly funded homeless service providers.

ACT 590 HB 892 **(Rep. Stephanie Hilferty)**
DISTRICTS/ECONOMIC DEVEL: Creates the West End Economic Development District in the parishes of Jefferson and Orleans.

ACT 351 (SB79) **(Sen. Beth Mizell)**
SUNSET LAW: Re-creates Louisiana Economic Development

ACT 199 (SB24) **(Sen. Patrick Connick)**
ROADS/HIGHWAYS: Designates Interstate 49 as "Senator J. Bennett Johnston Jr. Memorial Highway".

ACT 592 (SB 47) **(Sen. Beth Mizell)**
PUBLIC RECORDS: Requires certain email and telephone contact information for individual members of a board and commission.

ACT 734 (SB 56) **(Sen. Patrick Connick)**
LEVEES: Provides for the reorganization of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-West Bank and the Lafitte Area Independent Levee District.

ACT 736 (SB80) **(Sen. Beth Mizell)**
COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS: Expands the authority of Connect LA, increasing administrative fees and allowing the office to determine thresholds for remaining GUMBO disbursements.

ACT 738 (SB132) **(Sen. Caleb Kleinpeter)**
SCHOOLS: Provides that each public school board is to install exterior master key boxes to allow for rapid entry, response, and rescue by law enforcement and first responders during a school crisis.

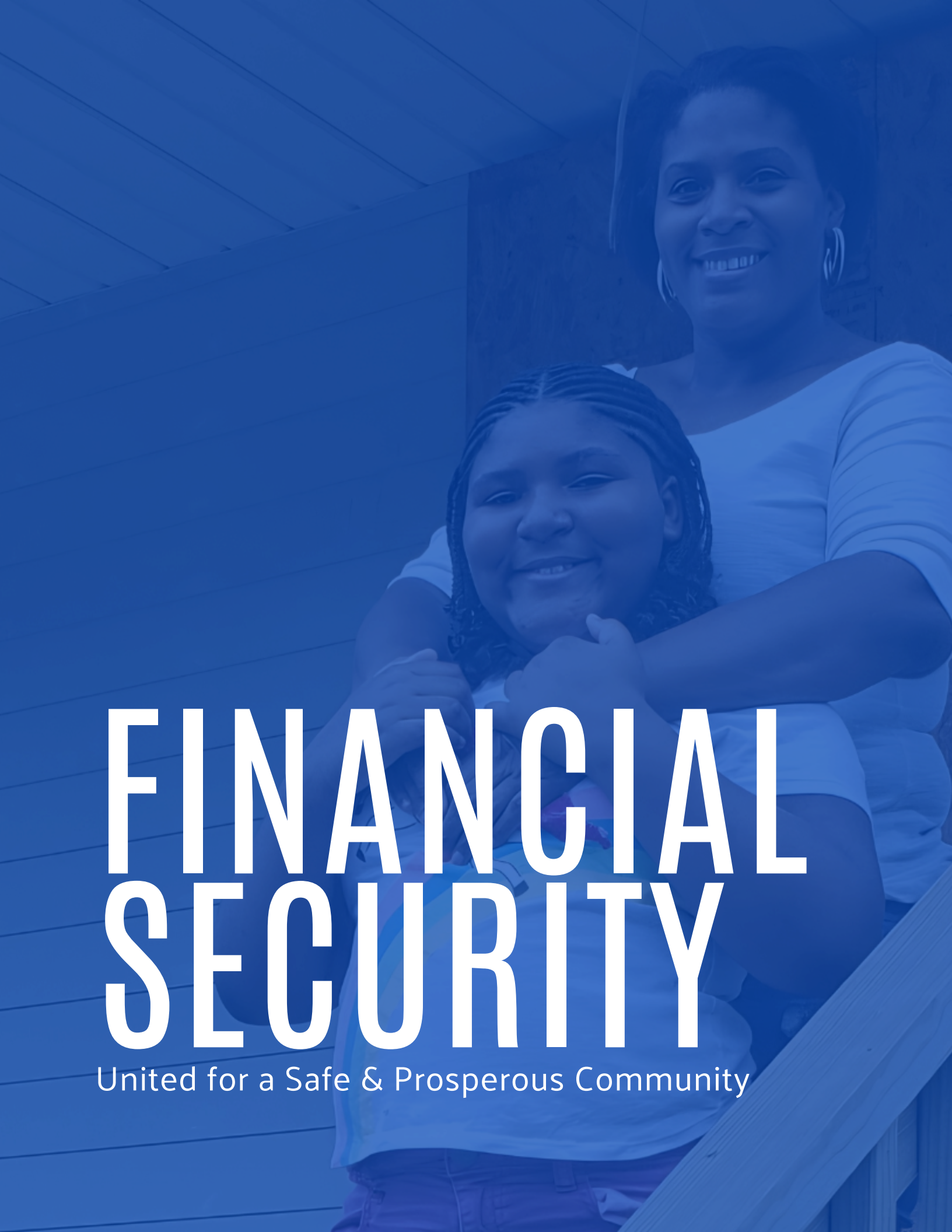
ACT 957 (HB 268) **(Sen. Royce Duplessis)**
LOCAL FINANCE: Provides for lead service line replacement.

Coastal Restoration & Protection

Ensuring coastal restoration and protection decisions are grounded in science and transparency is an existential matter for Louisiana. Two resolutions: SR 7 authored by Sen. Bob Hensgens and HR 1 authored by Sen. Ryan Bourriaque, legislators approved the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's (CPRA) FY 2027 Annual Plan, authorized $1.54 billion in coastal protection and restoration investments across 142 active projects statewide.



Additionally, flood protection governance was also a significant topic this session. Following over a year of controversy, resignations, and public disputes involving the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (SLFPA-East), the legislature considered several measures related to levee board membership and governance.



FINANCIAL SECURITY

United for a Safe & Prosperous Community



Consistent with our support for a comprehensive workforce strategy that increases economic mobility for working families, UWSELA advocated for proposals to increase Louisiana's minimum wage. But no bills advanced out of committee.

ACT 654 (HB 555) **(Rep. Kim Carver) BANKS/BANKING:** Provides relative to elderly financial exploitation.

HB 209 **(Rep. Delisha Boyd) Failed**
EMPLOYMENT/WAGES-MINIMUM: Establishes a state minimum wage rate.

HB 353 **(Rep. Tammy Phelps) Failed**
EMPLOYMENT/WAGES-MINIMUM: Establishes a state minimum wage.

SB 230 **(Sen. Regina Barrow) Failed**
EMPLOYMENT: Constitutional amendment to establish a state livable wage.

ACT 744 (SB 157) **(Sen. Samuel Jenkins)**
SCHOOLS: Provides for paid parental leave for eligible employees.

UWSELA, CARE Coalition, Invest in Louisiana, and the TIME to CARE Louisiana Coalition worked in close partnership with Sen. Jenkins' SB 157, which creates the Parental Leave for Educators Act, providing eligible K-12 public school employees up to six weeks of paid parental leave following the reimbursement fund to local education agencies for substitute teacher costs, estimated to cost approximately $6.6 million annually. Charmaine Caccioppi and the CARE Coalition also provided favorable testimony for passage of this bill.



HEALTHY COMMUNITY

United for a Safe & Prosperous Community



Expanding access to mental and behavioral healthcare, including crisis services and building behavioral health workforce capacity, is a critical priority for United Way of Southeast Louisiana.

Louisiana faces some of the nation's worst maternal and infant health outcomes. This session, several measures were taken up, but with mixed results on final passage. Pregnancy resource centers were the subject of significant debate this session following a 2025 Legislative Auditor report that identified oversight gaps in Louisiana's Pregnancy and Baby Care initiative, including concerns regarding service verification, performance reporting, and the absence of a licensure framework for centers providing certain health-related services.

ACT 136 (HB 199) **(Rep. Dustin Miller)**
NURSING HOMES: Extends the moratorium on nursing facilities and additional beds for nursing facilities.

ACT 629 (HB 222) **(Rep. Stephanie Berault)**
MEDICAID: Requires Medicaid to cover dental procedures for certain Medicaid enrollees.

ACT 944 (HB 352) **(Rep. Shane Mack)**
STUDENTS: Provides relative to behavioral health services for public school students.

ACT 668 (HB 740) **(Rep. Emily Chenevert)**
MEDICAID MANAGED CARE: Provides for independent claims review of Coordinated System of Care providers.

ACT 832 (HB 761) **(Rep. Stephanie Hilferty)**
HEALTH/CANCER: Revises membership of the advisory board for rare cancer treatments within the Dept. of Insurance to increase the number of oncologists serving and changes reporting deadlines.

ACT 833 (HB 766) **(Rep. Aimee Freeman)**
INSURANCE/HEALTH: Establishes updated requirements for health insurance coverage and price parity for oral and IV chemotherapy medication.

ACT 567 (HB 779) **(Rep. Aimee Freeman)**
HEALTH/MEDICAL TREATMENT: Provides relative to expedited partner therapy.

ACT 853 (HB 909) **(Rep. Annie Spell)**
INSURANCE: Requires coverage for mobile crisis response and behavioral health crisis services.

ACT 855 (HB 944) **(Rep. Stephanie Hilferty)**
HEALTH SERVICES: Establishes a Women's Health Consortium within the Louisiana Department of Health to coordinate stakeholders, provide guidance, and develop recommendations to advance women's health outcomes.

ACT 859 (HB 971) **(Rep. Joe Stagni)**
MEDICAID: Provides relative to Medicaid reimbursement for rural health clinics.

ACT 717 (HB 1224) **(Rep. Dixon McMakin)**
CHILDREN: Provides with respect to children in need of care.

ACT 567 (HB 779) **(Rep. Aimee Freeman)**
HEALTH/MEDICAL TREATMENT: Provides relative to expedited partner therapy.

ACT 969 (HB 1028) **(Rep. Rodney Lyons)**
MEDICAID: Requires the Louisiana Department of Health to increase the reimbursement rates for nonemergency medical transportation providers.

ACT 711 (HB 1176) **(Rep. Aimee Freeman)**
INSURANCE/HEALTH: Requires Medicare Advantage plans to cover integrative care services as delineated by nationally recognized clinical guidelines.

ACT 713 (HB 1196) **(Rep. Aimee Freeman)**
INSURANCE/HEALTH: Requires that any colonoscopy conducted for colorectal cancer screening shall be classified as a screening service, regardless of whether a polyp or other tissue is removed. It also establishes that any subsequent colonoscopy recommended by a healthcare provider be regarded as a screening service.

ACT 889 (HB 1231) **(Rep. Stephanie Berault)**
MEDICAID MANAGED CARE: Requires Medicaid to cover continuous glucose monitoring devices for pregnant women with gestational diabetes who require insulin and adds limited dental coverage for pregnant Medicaid recipients. It also directs the Louisiana Department of Health to adopt rules to implement both benefits.

ACT 962 (HB 1249) **(Rep. Steven Jackson)**
HEALTH/SCHOOL CLINICS: Provides relative to school-based health center services provided to students.

ACT 346 (SB 32) **(Sen. Patrick McMath)**
HEALTH/HOSPITAL DEPT: Establishes a Perinatal Bereavement Care Initiative within the LDH.

ACT 956 (SB 43) **(Sen. Patrick McMath) HEALTH SERVICES:** Provides relative to psychedelic-assisted therapy.

ACT 453 (SB 45) **(Sen. William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.)**
HEALTH SERVICES: Allows certain nonprofit organizations to provide free, home-like end-of-life care to terminally ill patients without state licensure, while establishing caregiver authority, medication handling standards, and liability protections for healthcare professionals acting in good faith.

Legislation to expand access to cancer screenings and early detection passed this session!

ACT 352 (SB 84) **(Sen. Brach Myers)**
HEALTH/ACC INSURANCE: Prohibits cost sharing for prostate cancer screenings and mandates health insurance coverage for men 40-49 in accordance with NCCN guidelines.

ACT 743 (SB 155) **(Sen. Kirk Talbot)**
HEALTH/ACC INSURANCE: Requires health insurers to cover medically necessary dental care when connected with cancer treatment.

ACT 469 (SB 169) **(Sen. Kirk Talbot)**
GENETICS: Clarifies how clinical utility is established for biomarker testing coverage, prohibiting conditioning coverage on lab classifications and standards unrelated to performing the covered test.

ACT 473 (SB 190) **(Sen. Beth Mizell)**
NURSING HOMES: Provides relative to nursing home licenses. This bill was amended in Senate Health & Welfare to apply to facilities selected for participation in CMMS's Special Focus Facility Program – excluding candidates as originally provided for.

ACT 253 (SB 206) **(Sen. Gregory A. Miller)**
HEALTH SERVICES: Provides for blood pressure testing in schools.

ACT 476 (SB 222) **(Sen. Thomas Pressly)**
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: Eliminates certain administrative and credentialing requirements for behavioral health providers, aligns documentation rules with federal standards, and expands provider flexibility in staffing and supervision. It also directs LDH to pursue federal approval to reimburse telehealth-based psychosocial rehabilitation services.

ACT 960 (SB 237) **(Sen. Regina Barrow)**
CHILDREN: Provides relative to child welfare.

ACT 749 (SB 250) **(Sen. Patrick McMath)**
HEALTH SERVICES: Provides relative to comprehensive weight management services.

ACT 896 (SB 405) **(Sen. Kirk Talbot)**
NURSING HOMES: The Nursing Home Choice Act, requires that residents or potential residents of nursing homes with a one-star federal quality rating receive counseling and be offered either immediate access to home- and community-based services or transfer to a higher-rated facility. It also mandates notification of the rating prior to placement, requires remediation plans and increased state oversight, and authorizes sanctions up to closure if the facility does not improve within two years.

ACT 897 (SB 414) **(Sen. Kirk Talbot)**
CONSUMERS: Provides for the Louisiana Medical Debt Protection Act, capping interest rates on debt arising from medically necessary care at 2%, prohibiting wage garnishment for those making 400% of the FPL, and prohibiting liens or foreclosure on a person's primary residence or vehicle.

ACT 508 (SB 415) **(Sen. Mark Abraham)**
HEALTH DEPARTMENT: Creates the Empower Louisiana Food Purchase Program.

ACT 898 (SB 433) **(Sen. Gerald Boudreaux)**
MEDICAID: Provides for Medicaid coverage of certain medications

ACT 389 (SB 439) **(Sen. Gerald Boudreaux)**
LOCAL EMPLOYEES: Expands existing law to require additional precancer screenings for firefighters, including screenings every 10 years during employment and coverage for retired firefighters, with all costs paid by employers and no out-of-pocket expenses. It also adds esophageal cancer precancer screenings beginning in 2027 and ensures participation remains voluntary.

ACT 517 (SB 451) **(Sen. Caleb Kleinpeter)**
HEALTH CARE: Changes the Identification of Hearing Loss in Infants Law to the Newborn Hearing Screening Law, updating terminology in the bill of rights for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

ACT 519 (SB 464) **(Sen. Regina Barrow)**
HEALTH CARE: Provides relative to coverage for severe obesity treatment.

ACT 520 (SB 470) **(Sen. Beth Mizell)**
HEALTH CARE: Provides relative to pregnant women in custody.





Domestic Violence Legislation

Louisiana's longstanding challenges with domestic violence received increased attention this session following the tragic Shreveport domestic violence mass shooting that claimed the lives of eight children. Domestic Violence shelters and victim service organizations face significant funding shortfalls due to the loss of federal funding. Despite requests for $3.2 million in state funding to backfill those reductions, no additional funding was included in the state budget. Louisiana still faces more than 1,300 unmet requests for emergency shelter annually, and providers have warned that services may be scaled back if funding gaps continue. https://lailluminator.com/2026/05/28/louisiana-domestic-violence-funding/

The legislature also considered how the criminal justice system responds to survivors whose experiences of abuse contributed to their involvement in criminal offenses. What ultimately passed was (ACT 526 - SB 523) by Sen. Beth Mizell. The final legislation, which was significantly amended down from the original bill proposing sentencing reform, allows documented survivors to seek clemency consideration sooner and adds victimization as a mitigating factor for courts to consider during sentencing decisions.

ACT 119 (HB 98) **(Rep. Mike Johnson)**
CRIMINAL/VICTIMS: Provides a penalty for the unlawful disclosure of confidential information relating to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

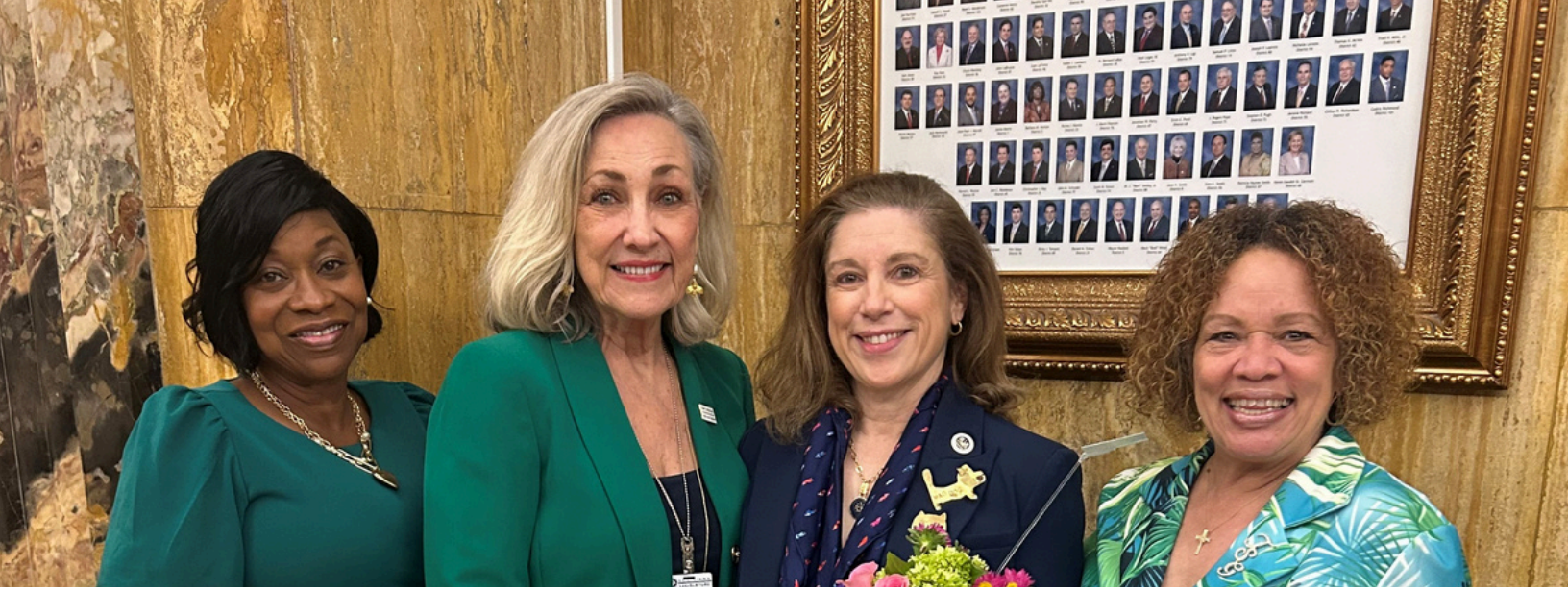
ACT 623 (HB 160) **(Rep. Alonzo Knox)**
DOMESTIC ABUSE: Increases the penalties for certain domestic violence offenses that involve strangulation.

ACT 131 (HB 161) **(Rep. Shane Mack)**
HUMAN TRAFFICKING: Provides relative to bail conditions for defendants alleged to have committed certain human trafficking offenses.

ACT 146 (HB 275) **(Rep. Delisha Boyd)**
CHILDREN/ABUSE: Provides relative to the minimum sentencing for child domestic abuse convictions.

ACT 64 (HB 297) **(Rep. Mandie Landry)**
LEASES: Expands early lease termination to include stalking and cyberstalking.

ACT 65 (HB 305) **(Rep. Kim Carver)**
CRIME/SEX OFFENSES: Provides relative to child sexual abuse materials.



ACT 815 (SB 579) **(Rep. Vanessa LaFleur)**
CRIMINAL/VICTIMS: Provides relative to the rights of survivors of sexual assault.

ACT 669 (HB 741) **(Rep. Delisha Boyd)**
HOUSING: Provides relative to housing for victims of human trafficking.

ACT 404 (HB 852) **(Rep. Rodney Lyons)**
TAX/INCOME TAX: Requires the income tax checkoff for donations to the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence be inscribed on the individual income tax form.

ACT 852 (HB 895) **(Rep. Delisha Boyd)**
HEALTH/MEDICAL TREATMENT: Provides relative to the treatment of sexual assault survivors by hospitals and healthcare providers.

HB 998 **(Rep. Aimee Freeman)** **Failed**
CRIMINAL/VICTIMS: Provides relative to the examination and medical care of victims of human trafficking-related offenses and domestic violence offenses involving strangulation.

Although HB 988 failed, Rep. Freeman was successful in passing HR321

HR 321 **(Rep. Aimee Freeman)**
DOMESTIC ABUSE: requests the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice to receive input, feedback, and suggestions relative to uniform protocols for examinations for survivors of domestic violence.

ACT 696 (HB 1064) **(Rep. Barbara Freiberg)**
COURTS: Provides relative to a domestic violence intervention court pilot program in the Nineteenth Judicial District Court.

ACT 892 (SB 42) **(Sen. Rick Edmonds)**
CRIME/PUNISHMENT: Prohibits using artificial intelligence to create child sexual abuse materials.

ACT 526 (SB 523) **(Sen. Beth Mizell)**
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Provides relative to sentencing relief for defendants who are survivors of domestic abuse, human trafficking, or sexual assault.

ACT 676 (HB 833) **(Rep. Delisha Boyd)**
PRIVACY: Creates the Sexual Assault Survivor Empowerment Task Force.

ACT 752 (SB 259) **(Sen. Regina Barrow)**
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Authorizes the creation of a civil protective order online application portal.

ACT 488 (SB 320) **(Sen. Beth Mizell)**
LAW ENFORCEMENT: Provides relative to DNA detection of sexual and violent offenses.



YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

United for a Safe & Prosperous Community



United Way of Southeast Louisiana kicked off Early Ed Month at Carlie Care Kids Child Center in Gretna, highlighting critical issues surrounding early care and education impacting children and families in Southeast Louisiana. We recognized our 2025 Legislative Champions for their efforts to remove barriers and create opportunities for families living under the ALICE threshold:

- Sen. J. Cameron Henry, Jr.
- Sen. Patrick McMath
- Sen. Royce Duplessis
- Sen. Beth Mizell
- Sen. Jimmy Harris
- Rep. Jason Hughes
- Rep. Kim Carver
- Rep. Stephanie Hilferty

Maintained Funding for Early Childhood Education in the State Budget

The legislature passed ACT 3 (HB 1) **by Rep. McFarland**, the state budget bill for the next fiscal year, which includes $78 million appropriation for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to maintain last year's funding level.

The legislature passed ACT 636 (HB 313) **by Rep. McFarland**, the supplemental budget for this fiscal year, which includes some provisions from SB 445, by Sen. Pressly, which would have codified additional revenue streams into the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund. The amendment to HB 313 added language directing any unspent funds from LDOE's budget in FY2025-26 to be deposited into the ECE Fund.

Created an Integrated, Unique ECE Identifier to Strengthen Transparency and Accountability in Louisiana's ECE System

The legislature passed ACT 576 (HB 992) **by Rep. Freiberg**, which creates a unique student identifier for children enrolled in publicly funded early childhood education programs. This will enable the state to measure long-term outcomes of public investments.

The legislature passed ACT 661 (HB 632) **by Rep. Spell**, which amends the current LA FIRST statute to create a more robust statewide data system agreement with the Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy Center to help Louisiana better understand longitudinal student outcomes research.

Expanded CCAP Application Eligibility

The Legislature passed ACT 383 (SB 351) **by Sen. Jackson-Andrews**, which allows women to apply for CCAP while pregnant. This allows expecting parents to begin the eligibility process earlier with the intent of reducing the amount of time a family may spend on the waitlist after the birth of a child.

Created a Statewide Fatherhood Commission

The legislature passed ACT 512 (SB 435)**, by Sen. Myers,** which creates the Louisiana Commission on Fatherhood Engagement within the Office of the Governor as a continuation of the Task Force on Fatherhood Engagement initially created by SCR 9 of the 2025 Legislative Session.

Youth Opportunities State Investment Took Center Stage as a Major Focus of the 2026 State Legislative Session to Fill Potential Jobs.

ACT 856 (HB 951) **(Rep. Dennis Bamburg) LABOR:** Creates a new office of "Business Workforce Solutions" in Louisiana Works with the primary mission of working with existing Louisiana businesses in every region to help craft solutions to their workforce challenges and supply them with the skilled and educated talent they need to grow. Approximately $31 million has been moved into the new office, coming from federal funds and the revised Incumbent Worker Training Program.

ACT 313 (HB 680) **(Rep. John Wyble) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** Builds on a federal waiver request to consolidate 15 local workforce boards into the state's existing Workforce Investment Council, empowering this business-led board to direct federal workforce training resources toward the state's economic growth priorities by addressing the workforce needs of Louisiana businesses. This long-sought reform and waiver isn't expected to diminish local and regional responsibility over delivery of workforce programs, but to create new, statewide coordination and accountability over them.

ACT 18 (SB 383) **(Sen. Adam Bass) FUNDS/FUNDING:** Modernizes aspects of the Incumbent Working Training Program and likely increases the funding available in 2027 to $35 million from $20 million annually. The bill creates a more flexible workforce funding mechanism to meet a broader set of workforce training needs. New businesses will be able to access training grants sooner, and the legislation will now allow funds for more types of training, such as non-credit college or university courses, work-based learning such as internship and apprenticeship, and pre-employment training. It also allows funding for sector-based initiatives, regional workforce initiatives, and innovative approaches for occupations facing shortages.

Together, these bills represent major administrative changes that have the potential to transform the state's role in engaging with businesses and providing workforce solutions that connect citizens to high-paying jobs.

United Way SELA and collaborative partners championed additional important Youth Opportunity legislation including Early Childhood Education, 4-Pre-K, K-12 Schools and Higher Education.

ACT 580 (HB 1146) **(Rep. John Wyble)**
EARLY CHILDHOOD: Streamlines Louisiana's early childhood governance structure by combining advisory bodies and consolidating responsibilities.

ACT 383 (SB 351) **(Sen. Katrina Jackson-Andrews)**
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Allows women to apply for CCAP while pregnant.

ACT 144 (HB 268) **(Rep. Kim Carver)**
STUDENTS: Strengthens existing law and policies to give students exposure to career opportunities while they are in middle school, so they are better prepared to explore pathways to good jobs through high school and beyond. Built upon the belief that students should start to learn about careers and jobs before high school, this bill was researched and crafted by Better Louisiana staff in partnership with the bill author and agency leadership.

ACT 844 (HB 807) **(Rep. Ken Brass)**
FUNDS/FUNDING: Establishes a program to increase instructional capacity in community and technical colleges in high-wage, high-demand fields.

SCR 33 **(Sen. Brach Meyers)**
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Creates a task force to study and evaluate Louisiana's current work-based learning efforts and make recommendations for improving coordination of high school internship programs promoted by the Louisiana Department of Education and apprenticeship programs promoted by Louisiana Works. Better Louisiana helped work with the author, the Governor's Office, and agencies to craft this short-term task force.

SCR 65 **(Sen. Rick Edmonds)**
SCHOOLS: Creates a task force to make recommendations on a statewide plan for advising students on career and academic pathways in K-12 schools.







Cradle-to-Career policies have gained substantial traction in Louisiana. During this session, legislators passed several instruments aimed at better connecting youth to the workforce training and credential attainment demanded by employers.

ACT 99 (SB 305) **(Sen. Rick Edmonds)**
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Creates a clearinghouse to help college students connect with career opportunities in Louisiana, providing information about high-demand jobs, the courses they need to get them, and the wages they can earn upon completion. This legislation came from recommendations from the Career Alignment Task Force.

ACT 794 (HB 325) **(Rep. Ken Bass)**
TOPS: Expands eligibility requirements for the TOPS Tech scholarship program for students in community and technical colleges and broadens it to include part-time students. TOPS Tech targets financial aid funds to students seeking more career-oriented associates degrees compared to TOPS which targets financial aid for four-year bachelor's degrees.

ACT 438 (HB 649) **(Rep. Ken Bass)**
HIGHER EDUCATION: Requires a simplified, uniform process to assist the growing number of students who are enrolling in postsecondary dual enrollment classes while still in high school.

ACT 100 (SB 376) **(Sen. Beth Mizell)**
SECONDARY EDUCATION: The Learn and Earn Act authorizes specialized career practicums or internships on high school campuses connected to formal business partnerships. There are examples in Louisiana of businesses like Papa Johns Pizza and credit union branches being operated by students on high school campuses.

ACT 628 (HB 218) **(Rep. Vanessa LaFleur)**
SCHOOLS: Requires the inclusion of questions pertaining to food insecurity on a residency questionnaire administered to public school students.

ACT 144 (HB 268) **(Rep. Kim Carver)**
STUDENTS: Expands requirements for schools to incorporate career-related activities for students in grades 6-8 and younger.

ACT 633 (HB 271) **(Rep. John Wyble)**
EDUCATION: Creates the Louisiana Commission on Foundational Education and abolishes the Louisiana Literacy Advisory Commission.

ACT 636 (HB 313) **(Rep. Jack McFarland)**
FUNDS/FUNDING: Provides for the transfer, deposit, and use of monies among state funds.

ACT 150 (HB 315) **(Rep. Michael Melerine)**
CONTRACTS: Prohibits non-compete contracts, agreements, or provisions for unpaid or paid interns and apprentices.

ACT 964 (HB 316) **(Rep. John Wyble)**
EDUCATION: Relative to requirements for teaching students K-3 foundational literacy skills.

ACT 794 (HB 325) **(Rep. Ken Brass)**
TOPS: Expands eligibility for TOPS-Tech to include attaining early college credits achieved through dual enrollment course completion.

ACT 548 (HB 392) **(Rep. Delisha Boyd)**
SCHOOLS: Provides relative to requirements for posting suicide hotline information on school websites and student ID cards.

Legislators significantly increased funding for the MJ Foster Promise Program in the state budget, raising the dedication from approximately $10.5 million last year to $25 million for FY 2027.

ACT 642 (HB 407) **(Rep. Ed Larvadain III)**
HIGHER EDUCATION: Provides relative to initial eligibility requirements for the M.J. Foster Promise Program.

ACT 433 (HB 445) **(Rep. Barbara Freiberg)**
EDUCATION: Provides relative to the Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory Council.

ACT 811 (HB 549) **(Rep. Stephanie Berault)**
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Creates the Bayou Growth Opportunity Workforce Program and fund to provide grants to employers for short-term workforce training delivered through approved training providers. Awards may cover training costs for employees (up to $2,000 per worker) and are administered by Louisiana Works in coordination with local workforce development boards.

ACT 436 (HB 575) **(Rep. Kim Carver)**
PUBLIC PROPERTY: Establishes a priority status for the acquisition of surplus state vehicles for youths in the extended foster care program.

ACT 655 (HB 584) **(Rep. Delisha Boyd**
CHILDREN/FOSTER CARE: Provides relative to children in foster care.

ACT 821 (HB 624) **(Rep. Mike Johnson)**
SCHOOLS: Provides relative to emergency operations plans at public schools.

ACT 660 (HB 626) **(Rep. Edmond Jordan)**
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Provides relative to suicide prevention plans at colleges and universities.

ACT 438 (HB 649) **(Rep. Ken Brass)**
HIGHER EDUCATION: Requires the establishment and administration of a statewide application process for dual enrollment programs.

The Legislature advanced policy around restructuring and modernizing the state workforce system, following the One-Door legislation advanced last year.

ACT 671 (HB 749) **(Rep. Kim Carver)**
FUNDS/INVESTMENTS: Authorizes the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority to contract with a program manager for the administration of certain savings accounts (ABLE, START, and START K12 programs) and the investment of account funds (EG +$9,000,000 GF EX See Note).

ACT 846 (HB 821) **(Rep. Jack McFarland)**
LAW ENFORCEMENT: Provides for the establishment of the Louisiana Center for Safe Schools within the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice.

ACT 313 (HB 680) **(Rep. John Wyble)**
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Authorizes a more centralized, statewide workforce development system by enabling Louisiana Works and the Workforce Investment Council to pursue federal waivers, consolidate local workforce structures, and shift planning, funding, and governance authority to the state level.

ACT 844 (HB 807) **(Rep. Ken Brass)**
FUNDS/FUNDING: Establishes the Workforce Instructor Capacity Investment Program to expand instructional capacity at two-year public institutions to meet employer demand in high-wage, high-demand sectors.

ACT 674 (HB 818) **(Rep. Neil Riser)**
STUDENT/ASSESSMENT: Limits time students spend on standards-based and any other assessments required by federal/state law, BESE, or other governing authorities to two percent of minimum instructional limits per year.

ACT 856 (HB 951) **(Rep. Dennis Bamburg, Jr.)**
LABOR: Creates an office of talent accelerator within LA Works to focus on coordinating workforce training programs, aligning workforce funding and employer needs, and integrating workforce initiatives across agencies.

ACT 694 (HB 1058) **(Rep. Dennis Bamburg, Jr.)**
TOPS: Requires the Board of Regents to establish and maintain a data system to collect information on financial aid usage at postsecondary institutions enrolling TOPS recipients. It centralizes data collection related to financial aid to support oversight of the TOPS program.

ACT 695 (HB 1059) **(Rep. Reese "Skip" Broussard)**
TOPS: Revises TOPS scholarship eligibility requirements by allowing individual Integrated Math courses to substitute for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II, rather than requiring the full three-course sequence. It applies to multiple TOPS award tracks and provides greater flexibility in how students meet required high school math coursework.

ACT 699 (HB 1079) **(Rep. Doyle Boudreaux)**
SCHOOLS/CHARTER: Authorizes a charter school to give enrollment preference to students entering kindergarten who attended certain licensed early learning centers.

ACT 970 (HB 1084) **(Rep. Christopher Turner)**
STUDENT/TUITION: Transfers authority to set and adjust certain tuition and mandatory fees from higher education management boards to individual public postsecondary institutions. It also shortens the allowable timeframe for tuition and fee increases, expands applicability to dual enrollment students, and shifts reporting requirements and oversight consequences to the institutions

ACT 580 (HB 1146) **(Rep. John Wyble)**
EARLY CHILDHOOD: Repeals statutory authority for the Advisory Council on Early Childhood Care and Education and transfers members, duties, and reports of the advisory council to the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission.

ACT 714 (HB 1204) **(Rep. Rodney Lyons)**
JUVENILES: Provides relative to the Back on Track Youth Pilot Program.

HR 17 **(Rep. Christopher Turner) TOPS: &** HR 171
STUDENT/LOANS-SCHOLARSHIP: Will produce studies on TOPS, TOPS Tech, and the M.J. Foster Promise Program, to better understand the return on investment of these major financial aid programs and how they can better serve the education and training needs of citizens. Several bills seeking to make more structural changes to TOPS and TOPS Tech, such as converting them to loans, failed this session. These data reports, to be produced by the Blanco Public Policy Center at UL Lafayette, will fuel a comprehensive discussion of the state's large annual expenditures on financial aid.

ACT 347 (SB 34) **(Sen. Patrick McMath)**
PUBLIC SFTY/CORRECT DEPT: Provides relative to alerts for missing persons.

ACT 355 (SB 105) **(Sen. Stewart Cathey, Jr.)**
TOPS: Removes standardized testing requirements for TOPS-Tech awards for veterans.

ACT 247 (SB142) **(Sen. Mike Reese)**
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Requires postsecondary education management boards to continue to comply with the conditions on all Board of Regents Support Fund matches.

ACT 490 (SB 322) **(Sen. Royce Duplessis)**
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Formalizes the definition of youth apprenticeships.

ACT 97 (SB 196) **(Sen. Franklin J. Foil)**
TAX/TAXATION: Provides relative to the time period to appeal a notice of assessment or the disallowance of a refund claim.

ACT 99 (SB 305) **(Sen. Rick Edmonds)**
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Requires BoR, LA Works, and other agencies to develop a publicly available statewide dashboard for career alignment, providing information related to education and career opportunities

ACT 744 (SB 157) **(Sen. Samuel Jenkins)**
SCHOOLS: Creates the "Parental Leave for Educators Act" for K-12 educators, requiring full-time employees to be compensated at 100% of base pay for up to six weeks.

ACT 497 (SB 347) **(Sen. Regina Barrow)**
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Provides for the crime of "unlawful deepfake" to be added to the definition of power-based violence under the Campus Accountability and Safety Act.

ACT 383 (SB 351) **(Sen. Katrina Jackson-Andrews)**
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Clarifies language around BESE for the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund.

ACT 100 (SB 376) **(Sen. Beth Mizell) SECONDARY EDUCATION:** The Learn and Earn Act, allows public high schools to create career practicums on campus in partnership with businesses.

ACT 18 (SB 383) **(Sen. Adam Bass)**
FUNDS/FUNDING: Expands the definition of "customized training" under the IWTP, lowers employer eligibility from 3 years to 2 years operating in Louisiana, and creates a Flexible Workforce Fund to support sector-based training, regional workforce initiatives, and pilot programs addressing high-demand occupations.

ACT 505 (SB 399) **(Sen. Adam Bass)**
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Creates the Louisiana Higher Education Research Security Council.

ACT 772 (SB 484) **(Sen. Mark Abraham)**
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Transfers numerous duties from BoR to LA Works and individual university management boards.

ACT 523 (SB 504) **(Sen. Gary Carter)**
STUDENTS: Requires that every student's Individual Graduation Plan or Individualized Education Program must include vocational training opportunities in students' school districts.

SCR 10 **(Sen. Royce Duplessis)**
CONDOLENCES: To celebrate and honor the life of Dr. Norman C. Francis.

SCR 33 **(Sen. Brach Meyers)**
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Creates the Work-Based Learning Coordination Task Force.

SCR 65 **(Sen. Rick Edmonds)**
SCHOOLS: Creates the K-12 Student Success Pathways Task Force to study and make recommendations on a statewide plan for advising students on career and academic pathways in K-12 public schools.



United Way of Southeast Louisiana Public Policy staff participated in the following events along with UWSELA Leadership:

- Ellevate Day at the Capitol
- Early Ed Day at the Capitol
- Domestic Violence Prevention Day at the Capitol
- Dad's Day at the Capitol
- Maternal Health Day at the Capitol
- CARE Day at the Capitol
- Louisiana Child Care Day at the Capitol

Thank You

United Way of Southeast Louisiana celebrates the success achieved in this year's State Legislative Session and we would like to especially thank our statewide collaborative partners who have embraced our agenda to eradicate poverty and to give voice to ALICE families across the state.

Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence
New Orleans Family Justice Center
Ellevate Louisiana
Invest in Louisiana
Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
The Louisiana CARE Coalition
The Council of Catholic Bishops
The Amandla Group
Saul's Light
New Orleans Health Department
Checkmate Strategies
American Cancer Society
Crescent Care
Louisiana Public Health Institute
Louisiana Primary Care Association
The Power Coalition
Louisiana Association of United Ways
Women United
Junior League of New Orleans
VIA LINK
Citizens for One Greater New Orleans
Tulane Newcomb Institute
March of Dimes
Jefferson Ready Start Network

Approved by UWSELA Public Policy Committee – April 23, 2026
Approved by UWSELA Board of Trustees – April 27, 2026



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