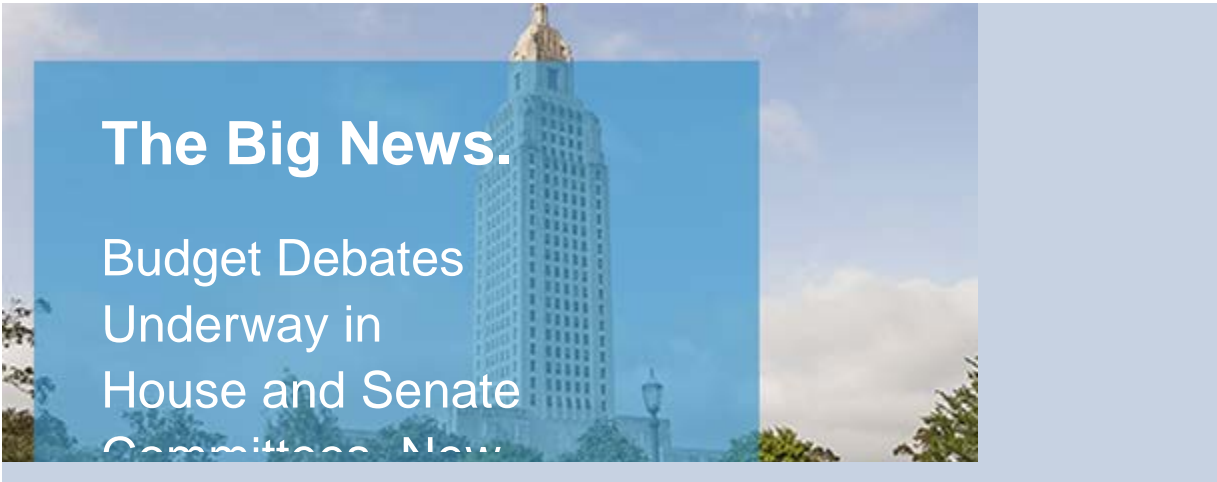


 April 8, 2018

THE WEEK **AHEAD.**

One Voice. Amplified



The Budget is Up for Debate This Week in Both House and Senate Committees, and the Revenue Estimating Conference May Recognize New Tax Dollars to Reduce the Deficit.

After weeks of hearings on state agency spending, the House Appropriations Committee will take public testimony on the budget ([HB 1](#)) this Tuesday. The Committee is nearing the end of their review and will likely vote to report HB 1 to the full House for debate by next week.

In an attempt to move the regular session along, the Senate Finance Committee began hearings today to start their review of the budget where [Senator Jim Fannin and Senator Sharon Hewitt questioned the administration heavily on government spending](#). The Committee is set to meet again tomorrow and will likely continue their public review for several weeks.

Currently, the administration estimates a \$994 million gap in desired spending for Fiscal Year 2019 and tax revenue that is available. However, this Thursday the Revenue Estimating Conference is expected to meet to recognize more than \$300 million in additional revenue resulting from the federal tax changes, which will reduce the deficit for next year.

These figures and debates are setting the stage for a likely second special fiscal session in late May or June.

Bill to Create a Statewide Framework for Ridesharing Companies Up Tomorrow.

Louisiana is one of just five states that has not yet created a clear framework to allow Transportation Network Companies (TNC), such as Lyft and Uber to operate statewide.

Instead, a patchwork of inconsistent local regulations that currently exists provides for some communities to have access to ridesharing while others don't. This creates an unstable market for drivers and passengers alike while keeping Louisiana from reaping the full benefits of the ridesharing economy. Those benefits include increased job opportunities, a boost to tourism, more patrons for local businesses, and safer streets.

LABI is in support of [HB 749](#) by Speaker Taylor Barras which would establish a single set of rules governing ridesharing across the state. HB 749 will allow drivers to earn wages across parish lines without confusion, and give Louisianans the opportunity to take advantage of access to convenient, safe and affordable transportation options at the tap of a button. This bill is set to be heard Monday in the House Transportation Committee.

ICYMI: Senate Uses a Procedural Move to End Debate on LABI-Backed Bill to Help Improve Louisiana's Auto Insurance Rates.

The Senate took up [SB 382](#) by Sen. Sharon Hewitt (R-Slidell) last week, which as amended, would make common-sense legal reforms aimed at lowering insurance costs to a level Louisiana desperately needs.

Sen. Hewitt provided compelling testimony but was met with opposition immediately.

Sen. Rick Ward (R-Port Allen) claimed the amendment to authorize a judge to allow evidence of seat belt usage in personal injury lawsuits, approved by the Transportation Committee, changed the nature of the bill. He argued SB 382 should now be debated in the Judiciary A Committee, which he chairs.

[CLICK HERE: Sen. Page Cortez, Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, took to the mic to defend the integrity of the Transportation Committee.](#) He explained there was no opposition from members when the bill was originally heard in his Committee. He explained that the process continues to work by allowing members to now vote on the bill if they have issues with the merits of the instrument. He explained that recommittal would ensure the bill is permanently halted in the process.

Even though multiple senators spoke in support of the merits of the bill, they claimed "the process" in the Senate in this instance was more important than the bill itself, than seeking to lower the nation's

2nd highest auto insurance rates for Louisiana families and businesses.

Sen. Ward successfully moved to end debate on the merits of the bill and instead send it to the Judiciary A Committee, which passed by a [vote of 21-16](#). Voting with Sen. Ward and AGAINST LABI:

Sens. Alario, Barrow, Bishop, Boudreaux, Carter, Chabert, Claitor, Colomb, LaFleur, Lambert, Long, Luneau, Martiny, Milkovich, Morrell, Peterson, Price, Riser, Smith, G. and Thompson.

Watch Senator Hewitt's testimony [HERE](#). Thank you to all who swiftly took action in support of SB 382 last Tuesday and to those of you who continue to take action.

Also of note, the House Civil Law Committee took up [HB 700](#) by Rep. Jack McFarland (R-Jonesboro) last week, which would make the same common-sense legal changes as Sen. Hewitt's bill. It was reported favorably as amended on a vote of 6-1 and is now set to be heard on the House floor Tuesday.

LABI remains in support of comprehensive reforms to ultimately lower car insurance rates, and these bills (HB 700 and SB 382) are the first step.

Both HB 700 and SB 382 authorize a judge to decide if evidence of seat belt usage should be introduced in civil trials related to injuries from motor vehicle accidents, repealing the “gag rule” that currently bans this evidence from courtrooms.

Removing the seat belt gag rule will allow judges and juries to consider apportioning the risk and cost of not wearing a seat belt to those individuals that take that risk, not the insurance-paying public at large.

Louisiana’s car insurance rates are 2nd highest in the nation at an average annual premium cost of \$2,225, compared to the national average of \$1,427. The reasons are many, but a major factor are state laws that encourage litigation and “have a dramatic and negative impact on Louisiana’s auto insurance market, and result in decreased competition due to insurer’s unwillingness to compete for business in our state,” according to the Louisiana Property and Casualty Insurance Commission.

Although SB 382 has been recommitted to the Senate Judiciary A Committee, we still need you to add your voice in support of this smart policy - let the members of the Senate Judiciary A Committee know that it is time for comprehensive reform that will lower car insurance rates.

To take action to support these bills, please click the Take Action button below or click [HERE](#)!

Monday.

House Transportation

HB 749 - Rep. Barras

This bill sets up a framework for transportation networks, such as Uber and Lyft, to operate statewide. It is set to be heard in the House Transportation Committee Monday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

Senate Finance

SB 252 - Sen. Carter

This Constitutional Amendment seeks to enact a state minimum wage effective August 1, 2019. It is set to be heard in the Senate Finance Committee Monday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

House Civil Law

HB 720 - Rep. Leger

This bill provides relative to liberative prescription. It is set to be heard in the House Civil Law Committee Monday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

Senate Revenue and Fiscal Affairs

SB 294 - Sen. Walsworth

This Constitutional Amendment seeks to authorize local taxing authorities to enter into cooperative endeavor agreements to negotiate stipulated tax payments (STPs) of ad valorem taxes. It is set to be heard in the Senate Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Committee Monday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

SB 346 - Sen. Walsworth

This bill authorizes local taxing authorities to enter into cooperative endeavor agreements that provide for stipulated tax payments (STPs). It is set to be heard in the Senate Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Committee Monday. LABI supports this bill.

Support**HB 341 - Rep. Abramson**

This bill changes the due date for filing first-time corporate franchise tax returns. It is set to be heard in the Senate Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Committee Monday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

House Floor

HB 561 - Rep. Emerson

This bill repeals the examination and licensing of retail and wholesale florists and creates a floral dealer permit. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Monday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

Senate Floor

SB 97 - Sen. Morrell

This bill extends the prescriptive period for instituting certain claims. It is set to be heard on the Senate Floor Monday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose**SB 257 - Sen. Milkovich**

This bill provides relative to appellate records. It is set to be heard on the Senate Floor Monday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose**SB 194 - Sen. Wesley Bishop**

This bill provides for an exception relative to contracts in which public entities are participants. It is set to be heard on the Senate Floor Monday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

SB 286 - Sen. Milkovich

This bill provides relative to the Physician's Bill of Rights. It is set to be heard on the Senate Floor Monday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

Tuesday.

House Civil Law

HB 97 - Rep. Crews

This qui tam bill allows private citizens to sue for public rights of actions. It also allows for punitive damages. It is set to be heard in the House Civil Law Committee Tuesday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

HB 391 - Rep. Pearson

This bill provides for the public navigation of running waters, including those running waters passing over any privately owned water bottom directly connected to a state-owned water bottom that is subject to the ebb and flow of the tide. It is set to be heard in the House Civil Law Committee Tuesday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

House Ways and Means

HB 382 - Rep. Connick

This bill provides with respect to the development of appraisals and assessments of public service properties by the La. Tax Commission. It is set to be heard in the House Ways and Means Committee Tuesday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

HB 774 - Rep. Bishop

This bill exempts taxing authorities in Lafayette Parish from certain public notice requirements regarding increases or renewals of property taxes which requirements are in excess of general requirements for public notices as provided in the open meetings law. It is set to be heard in the House Ways and Means Committee Tuesday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

HB 805 - Rep. Johnson

This bill requires the Dept. of Revenue (DOR) to annually report to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget details on tax expenditures administered by DOR that are claimed on income and franchise tax returns. It is set to be heard in the House Ways and Means Committee Tuesday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

Senate Judiciary A

SB 139 - Sen. Luneau

This bill provides the option of a right of direct action against the insurer alone when the insured is a small business employing fifty or fewer full-time employees. It is set to be heard in the Senate Judiciary A Committee Tuesday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

House Floor

HB 189 - Rep. Wright

This bill provides for processes, including public comment, to identify agency rules that may be contrary to law, outdated, unnecessary, overly complex, or burdensome. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Tuesday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

HB 372 - Rep. Connick

This bill establishes the Occupational Board Compliance Act. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Tuesday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

HB 653 - Rep. Simon

This bill expands applicability of law to conveyance devices and includes such devices as life safety systems and equipment under the authority of the state fire marshal. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Tuesday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose**HB 700 - Rep. McFarland**

This bill authorizes a judge to decide if evidence of seat belt usage should be introduced in civil trials related to injuries from motor vehicle accidents, repealing the “gag rule” that currently bans this evidence from courtrooms. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Tuesday. LABI supports this bill.

Support**HB 343 - Rep. Steve Carter**

This bill provides that teachers have a right to be free from undue pressure from school system employees and school board members including the withholding of information valuable to the teacher and other matters. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Tuesday. LABI supports this bill.

Support**HB 344 - Rep. Steve Carter**

This bill provides that teachers have a right to resources related to state standards and assessments. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Tuesday. LABI supports this bill.

Support**HB 397 - Rep. Edmonds**

This bill creates and provides relative to the membership and duties of the La. Sexual Assault Oversight Commission. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Tuesday. LABI supports this bill.

Support**Wednesday.****House Education**

HB 587 - Rep. Hoffmann

This bill lowers the minimum performance rating a teacher must receive in order to be granted tenure or reacquire tenure. It is set to be heard in the House Education Committee Wednesday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose**HB 651 - Rep. Hoffmann**

This bill reduces the percentage of which a teacher's evaluation shall be based on growth in student achievement from 35% to 15%. It is set to be heard in the House Education Committee Wednesday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

Thursday.

House Natural Resources

HB 180 - Rep. Marcelle

This bill provides for the groundwater resources in and the commissioners of the Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District. It is set to be heard in the House Natural Resources Committee Thursday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose**HB 431 - Rep. Marcelle**

This bill prohibits the open burning of munitions and waste explosives within 10 miles of Colfax. It is set to be heard in the House Natural Resources Committee Thursday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

House Education

HB 399 - Rep. Gary Carter

In the event of insufficient funding, this bill provides for reducing or eliminating Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) awards based on a student's academic and financial criteria and eliminates payment of Performance and Honors Award stipends to

students. It is set to be heard in the House Education Committee Thursday. LABI opposes this bill.

Oppose

HB 737 - Rep. Reynolds

This bill increases the time period that publishers have to respond to textbook reviews and provides relative to the local purchase of textbooks not reviewed by the state Dept. of Education. It is set to be heard in the House Education Committee Thursday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

House Floor

HB 403 - Rep. Steve Carter

This bill provides relative to membership on the Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District board of commissioners. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Thursday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

HB 414 - Rep. Ivey

This bill raises minimum grade point average requirements for maintaining eligibility for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Opportunity Award. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Thursday. LABI supports this bill.

Support

HB 727 - Rep. Thibaut

This bill amends the crime of unauthorized entry of a critical infrastructure and creates the crime of criminal damage to a critical infrastructure and the crime of conspiracy to commit either of these offenses. It is set to be heard on the House Floor Thursday. LABI supports this bill.

Support