

Louisiana State Legislature NEWS

June 6, 2019

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I---
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
THE ROAD NOT TAKEN by Robert Frost

LFRW Legislative News – April 8 --- June 6, 2019

There were more than 800 bills filed ahead of session. The legislators had to consider complex issues on taxes, teacher pay raises, abortion, the death penalty and more.

There are three key issues that took the forefront and those were the high cost of auto insurance, teacher pay raises and our crumbling infrastructure.



TORT REFORM FAILED IN LOUISIANA

SENATE BILL 154 - Sen. Sharon Hewitt (R) Slidell --- The citizens of Louisiana will have to wait another year for any attempt at lowering their costly auto insurance rates which are the 2nd highest in the nation! This bill, would remove the “*seat belt gag*,” and simply allow the jury to hear whether the wreck victims were wearing a seat belt, or whether they were not. This would have helped decrease the

settlements awarded in jury trials and helped lower insurance rates.

For more: Sen. Hewitt Capitol Report May 20: [Tort Reform Fails](#)

HOUSE BILL 372 – Rep Rick Talbot(R) River Ridge “Omnibus Premium Reduction Act of 2019” --- This bill had four legal procedures that could lead to lower auto insurance rates. The incentive to negotiate settlements rather than go to trial decreases expense. Litigation plays a significant role in increasing insurance rates...negotiation translates into lower rates. Six insurance companies left Louisiana in 2018, premiums rose from 52% since 2011, and citizens pay \$2,298 per year, which is \$841 more than the national average.

When this bill failed to pass, with only four weeks in the session, Sen. Jack Donahue (R) Mandeville said, “*We all know what is going to happen.*” Because there is not enough time to get approval from Senate Finance Committee, “*it will go into the trash,*”

Louisiana State Legislature NEWS

June 6, 2019

The implication is that nobody would have to vote on an issue that addresses high insurance prices. Louisiana citizens are once again on the losing end of what could have been a financial gain for them.

More: [Chance to lower auto insurance rates?](#) The Advocate, May 7, 2019 Mark Ballard



Gov. John Bel Edwards scores big win with teacher pay raises...Senate Concurrent Resolution 3 - www.legis.la.gov

The measure to give teachers a pay raise of \$1000 and \$500 to support workers passed the House on Monday 103-0. This ended a stalemate between House Republican leaders and the Democratic Governor. Additionally, the schools get an extra \$39M in discretionary money.

The House Republicans backed the pay raises but objected to the discretionary funds for districts because they felt the state could not afford both -- \$140 million.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Cameron Henry, R-Metairie, said, “...we could start up next year a little bit in the hole, somewhere between \$23 Million and \$47 Million,” [The Advocate](#)

This issue has proved to be a split between Gov. Edwards, the Senate and BESE versus the House leaders. According to [EDUCATION WEEK](#) pressure from school leaders in an election year resulted in the House GOP ending their opposition.

To be sure, Louisiana’s education system has not proven to be successful or cost-effective. In 2016 Louisiana had the 28th highest per-pupil expenditures and consistently placed between 48th and 50th in the nation educationally. The outcome of more money in the education system remains to be seen.

According to Jeff Sadow, “Not that the state’s teachers suffer from low pay. On average, they make over \$3,000 more than the state’s median household income. It doesn’t make sense to pay for the same substandard thing. Legislators shouldn’t agree to teacher pay raises in any form without passing teacher competency reforms.” Political Science Professor at LSU-Shreveport - [Outline.com](#)

There is some good news on the horizon for Louisiana tax payers because a plan is in the works for the repairing and expansion of the bridges and roads upon which we travel.

Louisiana State Legislature NEWS

June 6, 2019

HOUSE BILL 578- Rep. Tanner Magee (R) Houma --- Dedicates the economic proceeds from the Deepwater Horizon litigation to transportation projects and redirects funding to the Construction Sub fund of the Transportation Trust Fund.

According to Rep. Tanner “*This is going to be the biggest infrastructure investment in three decades...*” Among the projects: \$100 Million for Shreveport’s Interstate 49 North Connector; \$150 million for Lafayette’s I-49 South.



ANOTHER POSTIVE NOTE: The Louisiana Federation of Republican Women work diligently within our state to make a positive difference in every area. The unique culture and food of Louisiana is the envy of all who come to live or visit and it is a place that will “*feed your soul!*”

There are many strong legislators who stand up for conservative principles---against an onslaught of criticism and pressure. These men and women need to hear our voices of appreciation when they make tough decisions, because they “*took the one less traveled by*” and is so doing “*made all the difference.*”

Thank you and I appreciate your comments,

Joyce Linde – LFRW Legislative Chair
joyce.linde@lusfiber.net