

House Committee on Appropriations

Minutes of Meeting
2020 Regular Session
May 8, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The committee administrative assistant called the roll.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman
Representative Roy Daryl Adams
Representative Tony Bacala
Representative Barbara W. Carpenter
Representative R. Dewith Carrier
Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr., vice chairman
Representative Raymond J. Crews
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel
Representative Mary DuBuisson
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman
Representative Lance Harris
Representative John R. Illg, Jr.
Representative Timothy P. Kerner
Representative Tanner D. Magee
Representative Jack G. McFarland
Representative Blake Miguez
Representative Troy D. Romero
Representative Francis C. Thompson
Representative Christopher Turner
Representative William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Frederick Douglass Jones
Representative Rodney Lyons
Representative C. Denise Marcelle

Representative Dustin Miller

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Katie Andress, committee administrative assistant
Stephanie Little, attorney
Amanda Trapp, legislative analyst

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Faye Talbot, sergeant at arms
Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION

Representative Edmonds took a personal privilege to commend the House Committee on Appropriations staff for their work during the governor's stay at home order.

House Bill No. 105 by Representative Zeringue

The following agencies contained in House Bill No. 105 were presented and discussed:

Louisiana Department of Health

Dr. Courtney Phillips, secretary, Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), 628 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9509, made opening remarks regarding the department's FY 21 budget.

Ms. Cindy Rives, undersecretary, LDH, 628 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9509, presented and discussed a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records, as well as discussed the enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) rate projections with Representative Bacala.

Ms. Rives also discussed potential budget reductions to the department with Representatives Zeringue and Gary Carter.

Ms. Rives and Mr. Stephen Russo, executive counsel, LDH, 628 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9509, discussed the sources of funding for the state's public private partnership hospitals and Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation (MFAR) with Representative Bacala.

Ms. Rives and Mr. Russo discussed the development and implementation of a new Medicaid reimbursement model for hospitals with Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Harris, and Wheat.

Ms. Rives and Mr. Russo further discussed uncompensated care costs, the Hospital Stabilization Fund, and the cost savings associated with implementing a long-term managed care model with Representative Bacala.

Ms. Rives discussed certain challenges the state's hospitals faced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Rives and Mr. Russo also discussed the benefits of implementing a new Medicaid reimbursement model with Representative Gary Carter.

Ms. Rives discussed the department's efforts to generate a more accurate projection of the FY 21 budget with Representative Thompson.

Ms. Rives also discussed funding for certain hospital classes with the implementation of the new hospital reimbursement model with Representative Crews and discussed the disproportionate share of hospital (DSH) payments and Medicaid eligibility requirements with Representative Bacala.

Ms. Rives explained both the benefits and drawbacks of the proposed Medicaid reimbursement model with Representative Freeman.

Ms. Rives discussed the projected enhanced FMAP that the department will receive due to the COVID-19 pandemic with Representative McFarland.

Ms. Rives and Mr. Russo discussed Medicaid eligibility and enrollment procedures, funding to rebase nursing home facilities, and federal repayments for COVID-19 related expenses with Representatives Zeringue, Carrier, and Crews.

Dr. Phillips addressed the committee regarding her future plans for the department and provided certain COVID-19 statistics to Representative Deshotel. Dr. Phillips also discussed COVID-19 contact tracing with Representatives Crews and Edmonds.

The meeting recessed at 11:15 a.m. and reconvened at 12:15 p.m.

Higher Education

Board of Regents

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, commissioner, Board of Regents, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 6-200, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-4253, presented and discussed a handout, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Dr. Reed discussed the transition from traditional on-campus learning to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital divide among today's college students, and potential enrollment issues in the future with Representative Gary Carter.

Dr. Reed also discussed funding trends for the state's institutions over the past several years with Representatives Romero and Wheat and discussed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding allocated to each institution with Representative Edmonds.

Dr. Reed and Mr. Terrence Guinn, deputy commissioner, Board of Regents, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 6-200, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-4253, discussed potentially utilizing funds from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF) for Higher Education and CARES Act funding allocations with Representatives Bacala and Romero.

Mr. Guinn provided a breakdown of annual mandated costs to Higher Education to Representative Freeman.

Louisiana State University

Dr. Tom Galligan, interim president, Louisiana State University (LSU), 3810 West Lakeshore Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 578-2711, addressed the committee regarding LSU's efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 throughout the state and funding losses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Galligan also discussed the distribution methodology used to allocate CARES Act funding to students with Representatives Zeringue, Gary Carter, and Freeman.

Dr. Galligan discussed the LSU's grading policy implementations due to the COVID-19 pandemic with Representative Gary Carter. Dr. Galligan also discussed the impact of COVID-19 on LSU athletics with Representatives Zeringue and Gary Carter.

Dr. Galligan discussed LSU's preparation and transition from traditional learning to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic with Representative Freeman.

Dr. William B. Richardson, vice president, LSU AgCenter, 101 Efferson Hall, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, (225) 578-4161, addressed the committee regarding the AgCenter's financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Richardson discussed the potential utilization of GEERF for the AgCenter with Representatives Zeringue and Bacala.

Dr. John Kirwan, executive director, Pennington Biomedical Research Center, 6400 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 763-2513, addressed the committee regarding the importance of Pennington and discussed the center's financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Sujuan W. Boutte, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, 602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-9294, discussed the deadline to apply for financial aid and scholarships for the Fall 2020 semester with Representative Gary Carter.

Dr. Galligan discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on LSU's research grants and FY 21 budget projections with Representative Bacala.

Southern University System

Dr. Ray Belton, president, Southern University System, Baton Rouge, LA 70813, (225) 771-4500, addressed the committee regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the system's FY 21 budget and discussed the total CARES Act allocation to the Southern University System, student enrollment statistics, and the effects of the digital divide among Southern University System students with Representative Gary Carter.

Dr. Belton discussed FY 21 budget projections with Representatives Bacala and Deshotel. Dr. Belton also discussed the distribution of CARES Act funding to students at Southern University's Shreveport campus with Representative Deshotel.

Representative Gary Carter in the chair.

University of Lafayette System

Dr. Jim Henderson, president, University of Lafayette (UL) System, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 7-300, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-6950, addressed the committee regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UL System and the distribution methodology used to allocate CARES Act funding to students.

Dr. Henderson and Representative Gary Carter discussed the Compete LA program.

Dr. Henderson and Representative Turner discussed the return on investment of college graduates to the state.

Louisiana Technical and Community College System

Dr. Monty Sullivan, president, Louisiana Technical and Community College System (LCTCS), 265 South Foster Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 922-1643, addressed the committee regarding the importance of educating Louisiana's workforce and his concern for the FY 20 and FY 21 budgets.

Dr. Sullivan and Representative Gary Carter discussed the preparation for transitioning certain programs within the LCTCS system from traditional to remote learning and the impact of the digital divide among LCTCS students.

Dr. Sullivan and Representative Illg discussed student enrollment statistics and programs that are projected to be in high demand.

IV. BUSINESS

COMMITTEE ROOM 6 TO BE USED FOR OVERFLOW

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Gary Carter announced the House Committee on Appropriations would meet on Monday, May 11, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. in HCR 5.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Turner offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 21 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Adams, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Gary Carter, Crews, Deshotel, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Harris, Illg, Kerner, Magee, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Thompson, Turner, and Wheat voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Jerome "Zee" Zeringue
House Committee on Appropriations