

House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

Minutes of Meeting
2020-2021 Interim
August 19, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Stephen C. Dwight, chairman of the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. in Room 1, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Stephen C. Dwight, chairman
Representative Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV
Representative Wilford Dan Carter, Sr.
Representative Royce Duplessis, vice chairman
Representative Les Farnum
Representative Foy Bryan Gadberry
Representative Valarie Hodges
Representative Dodie Horton
Representative Barry Ivey
Representative Sam L. Jenkins, Jr.
Representative Michael T. Johnson
Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe
Representative Tanner D. Magee
Representative Candace N. Newell
Representative Rodney Wayne Schamerhorn
Representative Malinda B. White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Charles Alexander Henry

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patricia Lowrey-Dufour, legislative analyst
Lorriane Lucas, attorney
Rosalie Ammersbach, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms

III. BUSINESS

Consideration of the secretary of state's determination and reasons therefor that the public health emergency caused by COVID-19 impairs the elections to be held on November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, to the extent that an emergency election plan is pursuant to R.S. 18:401.3

R. Kyle Ardoin, secretary of state, no witness card submitted, discussed why the emergency election plan was necessary for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections in the state and provided a handout, Exhibit A, "Emergency Certification", which is in the committee records.

Representative Johnson asked Mr. Ardoin if the proposed emergency election plan had to be approved by both House and Senate Governmental Affairs committees, the Louisiana legislature, and the governor to implement the plan for the elections; failure to approve the plan by any of those entities would have resulted in following existing law. Mr. Ardoin replied affirmatively and added that he wanted to review the emergency provisions of the law since the plan did not provide for the circumstances of a pandemic.

Representative Johnson asked what determined the need for an emergency election plan. Mr. Ardoin replied that logistical and mechanical issues were considered. Mr. Ardoin explained some of the concerns: if consolidation of precincts was necessary; usage of larger facilities for precincts for proper social distancing; timely deadlines for qualified voters to receive and return their absentee ballot; and ensuring enough time to cure absentee ballots.

Representative LaCombe disagreed with Mr. Ardoin's notion that Louisiana was in a better situation in terms of coronavirus case numbers, and explained that hospitals were overwhelmed with coronavirus patients and did not have available beds for other patients. Mr. Ardoin stated that he was there to discuss the proposed emergency election plan and what he needed, logistically, to provide for a good election that could be implemented by election officials around the state with procedures as close to normal as possible.

Representative Jenkins stated that an emergency existed and a plan needed to be in place to accommodate the circumstances brought by the coronavirus pandemic.

Representative White asked why the emergency election plan approved and executed for the July 11, 2020, and August 15, 2020, elections was not being considered for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections. Mr. Ardoin did not respond.

Representative Ivey asked Mr. Ardoin if anything else affected the state of emergency beyond the threat of transmission of the disease. Mr. Ardoin said triggers that could have impaired the election were technical, mechanical, or logistical problems with relocation or consolidation of polling places, potential shortages of commissioners and absentee commissioners, or shortages of voting machines.

Representative Newell offered a motion to concur in certification of emergency. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 11 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Newell, and Schamerhorn voted yea. Representative Dwight abstained.

Consideration of the written emergency election plan for the elections to be held on November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, in the state of Louisiana submitted by the Secretary of State in accordance with R.S. 18:401.3

R. Kyle Ardoin, secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 922-2880, discussed the proposed emergency election plan for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections in Louisiana and provided handouts, which are in the committee records as follows:

- Exhibit B, dated August 17, 2020, "Emergency Election Plan For The November 3, 2020 and December 5, 2020 Elections In The State of Louisiana"; and
- Exhibit C, "November and December 2020 Election Possible Emergency Election Plan".

Representative Beaulieu asked Mr. Ardoin if he received feedback from the clerk of courts and registrar of voters regarding the plan. Mr. Ardoin said there was a shortage of commissioners during both elections. He proposed a \$50 per day pay increase for commissioners in the proposed emergency election plan. He added that there were issues with the U.S. Postal Service that he hoped to address with the postmaster general. Mr. Ardoin said he learned the importance of not delaying an election because it created a ripple effect of issues with the management process. He said that every precaution was taken to keep all polling places sanitary and encouraged voters to download LA Wallet.

Representative Beaulieu asked Mr. Ardoin if anything would be altered at polling places for the safety of staff or commissioners. Mr. Ardoin replied that they would follow the same procedures and sanitation process.

Representative Beaulieu asked Mr. Ardoin if coronavirus source tracing led back to the polls for commissioners or in-person voters. Mr. Ardoin said that he wasn't aware.

Representative Beaulieu asked why there wasn't a requirement for voters to wear masks at polling places. Mr. Ardoin replied that masks were offered to everyone at polling locations; however, he could not force voters to wear masks as it could create litigation situations.

Representative Beaulieu asked Mr. Ardoin if extra security would be provided at the ballot drop-off locations or at a split polling location. Mr. Ardoin replied that they would staff additional personnel and security at ballot drop-off locations.

Representative Gadberry asked Mr. Ardoin if an absentee ballot would be counted if it arrived after the deadline. Mr. Ardoin replied that the deadline to submit an absentee ballot to the registrar of voters office was by 4:30 p.m. the day before the election and any ballot submitted after the deadline was not counted; however, if a voter was in the military, overseas, hospitalized, or had tested positive for coronavirus during and after early voting but before election day, the deadline was 8 p.m. on election day.

Representative Jenkins asked Mr. Ardoin why the proposed emergency plan for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections appeared to roll back protections for voters. Mr. Ardoin said that statistics from the July 11, 2020, election, showed that 1,864 individuals (1.88% of all absentee ballots) utilized the COVID-19 absentee ballot application. He said the emergency election plan used for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections was developed and approved when Louisiana was under a stay-at-home order due to the coronavirus pandemic. Mr. Ardoin said when the election was held, Louisiana was in Phase 2 and a vast majority of voters voted in-person.

Representative Jenkins asked Mr. Ardoin if he believed there could be a higher voter turnout for the November 3, 2020, election than for the July 11, 2020, and August 15, 2020, elections. Mr. Ardoin replied affirmatively, stating that he anticipated as high as 2.1 million people voting in the November 3, 2020, election. He believed voters would not be at risk under the proposed emergency election plan. He said if a voter felt at risk or a physician advised them not to vote in-person, they could request and submit a note from the physician stating that they were under the hospitalization program, which would allow them to receive an absentee ballot.

Representative Jenkins asked Mr. Ardoin if he had received input from the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). Mr. Ardoin stated that he had not included LDH in the discussions of the proposed emergency plan, but included their recommendations for sanitizing polling places. He said the governor was included in discussions of the plan. The governor did not advise Mr. Ardoin to meet with or include LDH in discussions. Mr. Ardoin added that LDH did not provide support in regards to elections.

Representative Jenkins asked Mr. Ardoin how nursing home residents would vote in the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections. Mr. Ardoin stated that if restrictions on visitation remained in place during the elections, voters enrolled in the Nursing Home Program would receive assistance from an employee of the nursing home. The Department of State planned to provide a training video for nursing home employees to watch before they could assist residents in voting. Mr. Ardoin stated that if restrictions on visitation were lifted, current law allowed family members or registrars to assist.

Representative Jenkins asked why National Guard and off-duty law enforcement officers were being recruited as poll workers under the proposed emergency election plan. Mr. Ardoin replied that they were exploring all options. He said more polling commissioners within church groups, civic organizations, and chambers of commerce were being recruited, but National Guard and off-duty law enforcement officers would be a last-ditch effort if assistance was needed for curbside absentee ballot drop-off stations.

Representative White asked Mr. Ardoin how immunocompromised individuals would vote if they did not test positive for coronavirus but were not comfortable voting in-person. Mr. Ardoin said they could request a note from a physician stating that they were under the hospitalization program, which would allow them to receive an absentee ballot. He added that voters with disabilities could apply for an absentee ballot under the disability program.

Representative White asked when the proposed emergency election plan for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections was presented to the governor. Mr. Ardoin replied Sunday, August 16, 2020.

Representative Ivey asked if absentee ballots were automatically mailed to individuals enrolled in the 65 years of age or older program for every election. Mr. Ardoin stated that those enrolled in the program could choose to automatically receive an absentee ballot for every election or a single election.

Representative Ivey asked Mr. Ardoin if he believed that the emergency election plan that was implemented for the July 11, 2020, and August 15, 2020, elections met current law standards of maximizing voter participation. Mr. Ardoin replied affirmatively.

Representative Ivey asked Mr. Ardoin if an individual out of the voting territory limits during the early voting period and on election day was required to provide documentation supporting his claim, and if his office would investigate such a claim. Mr. Ardoin replied no.

Representative Ivey asked Mr. Ardoin if social distancing would be enforced at all polling places. Mr. Ardoin said if there was a disruption to the voting process, the commissioner in charge would call law enforcement to maintain order.

Representative Ivey asked Mr. Ardoin if there was enough time to produce another proposal for the emergency election plan. Mr. Ardoin explained that if both House and Senate Governmental Affairs committees approved the proposed emergency election plan, House and Senate membership had 15 days to vote on the plan. He said there would not be enough time to propose a different plan.

Representative Ivey suggested that if the proposed emergency election plan did not pass the House and Governmental Affairs committee, the committee could stand in recess or schedule another hearing for Friday, August 21, 2020, to hear a revised version of the emergency election plan used for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections.

Dr. Tina Stefanski, Louisiana Department of Health, 628 North 4th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9509, spoke for information only.

Steve Russo, Louisiana Department of Health, 628 North 4th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9509, spoke for information only.

Representative Jenkins asked if more protections should be in place for the elections. Dr. Stefanski said if a voter had symptoms of coronavirus, tested positive for it, or was quarantining after exposure, they should stay at home. Dr. Stefanski added that individuals with health conditions were at high risk and were also advised to stay at home.

Representative Jenkins asked Dr. Stefanski if LDH was consulted by the secretary of state or his office and if she had the chance to compare the proposed emergency election plan for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections to the emergency election plan implemented in the July 11, 2020, and August 15, 2020, elections. Dr. Stefanski said LDH was not consulted and she had not compared the plans.

Representative Jenkins asked Dr. Stefanski if there was a spike in coronavirus case numbers due to the July 11, 2020, election. Dr. Stefanski stated that she did not have the data to accurately answer his question.

Representative Beaulieu asked what LDH was doing to try to stop the spread of coronavirus in nursing homes. Dr. Stefanski stated that LDH conducted weekly facility-wide testing in nursing homes to identify those who were asymptomatic and detect those who were positive before showing symptoms and move residents into a "covid unit" to help decrease the spread within the nursing home. She said that as community spread increased, spread within nursing homes would also increase.

Mr. Russo said the federal government would add \$5 billion to the \$4.9 billion provided to nursing homes to hire more staff members, help control infection, and gain better technology for virtual visitation with family members. He said weekly testing for nursing home staff members would be mandated in states that had a 5% or higher positivity rate.

Representative Beaulieu asked if a resident's family member could safely enter a nursing home facility to assist with voting instead of an employee. Mr. Russo said it was under discussion.

Representative Newell asked Dr. Stefanski how individuals without health care could meet the requirement of obtaining a physician's note to receive an absentee ballot. Dr. Stefanski said many individuals in Louisiana faced those barriers and could have trouble obtaining an absentee ballot. She stated that many high-risk individuals would limit their risk of exposure to coronavirus by staying at home.

Representative Newell asked Dr. Stefanski if it was possible for polling places to become the next hot spot for coronavirus cases. Dr. Stefanski stated that if guidelines for social distancing, cleaning, and disinfecting were followed, it would be safe for the young and healthy; however, she expressed concern for individuals with high-risk conditions. She hoped there would be a safer option for them to vote.

Representative Jenkins asked Dr. Stefanski if there were certain groups of people who were encouraged to stay at home, such as high-risk individuals and those who tested positive for the virus. Dr. Stefanski stated that individuals were encouraged to stay at home if they had tested positive for the virus, had COVID-like symptoms and were awaiting test results, might have been exposed to coronavirus, had underlying medical conditions, or those that had or were care givers.

Representative LaCombe asked if it would be less burdensome on healthcare workers for the legislature to pass an emergency election plan that was similar to the plan used for the July 11, 2020, and August 15, 2020, elections, instead of requiring a physician's note. Mr. Russo replied affirmatively and said LDH was very reluctant to increase pressure on the healthcare system.

Representative LaCombe asked Dr. Stefanski about availability for coronavirus testing in Louisiana. Dr. Stefanski said there were challenges with availability and receiving results, depending on supply and demand. There had been some relief in turnaround times with results received in three to five days.

Representative LaCombe expressed his concerns about potential barriers the proposed emergency election plan could cause for individuals using absentee ballots. He feared that many individuals would have difficulty accessing coronavirus testing, doctors, and verifying disability to receive an absentee ballot. Mr. Ardoin explained that his office could provide a safe voting environment under the proposed emergency election plan.

Representative Beaulieu in the chair.

Representative Duplessis asked if Mr. Ardoin would support a change in the way an emergency election plan was created by the secretary of state; instead of receiving approval from both House and Senate committees and legislative bodies, committee members could amend the emergency election plan to create a more robust plan prior to a vote. Mr. Ardoin said he would be open to a more formal process. He stated that creating an emergency election plan without a formal process was frustrating. He said the original intent of the law was for natural disasters.

Representative Duplessis asked Mr. Ardoin for voter turnout numbers from the 2016 presidential election, and what efforts would be made to increase voter turnout for the 2020 presidential election. Mr. Ardoin said turnout was ~69% for the 2016 presidential election and estimated voter turnout would be between 68-70% for the 2020 presidential election. Mr. Ardoin said it was always his goal to increase voter turnout, but it was up to the public to decide to vote or not. He said voter turnout from the previous gubernatorial election exceeded expectation. Mr. Ardoin said his role was to educate the public on election dates and to provide polling location and deadline information.

Representative Duplessis asked if Mr. Ardoin was aware that Louisiana was one of seven states that required an excuse beyond the fear of contracting coronavirus to vote by mail. Mr. Ardoin responded affirmatively.

Representative Duplessis asked Mr. Ardoin why the number of early voting days in the proposed emergency election plan changed from 13 to 10 days. Mr. Ardoin replied that the last day to register to vote was October 13, 2020, at 11:59:59 p.m. Registrars had two days to process applications before early voting began on October 16, 2020. He said registering voters while conducting an election could create issues within the election registration information network. Mr. Ardoin said more time was needed to process applications.

Representative Duplessis asked Mr. Ardoin why Louisiana could not have same-day voter registration. Mr. Ardoin replied that there would need to be a policy change by the state legislature and more resources provided to account for those changes.

Chairman Dwight in the chair.

Representative Duplessis asked Mr. Ardoin why he was opposed to receiving money and other resources from the federal government to improve processes and have resources to allow for same-day voter registration. Mr. Ardoin stated that he philosophically opposed the federal government mandating how state elections would be conducted based on federal funding stipulations.

Representative Duplessis asked Mr. Ardoin about postal service difficulties associated with mail balloting. Mr. Ardoin said there were major issues during the July 11, 2020, elections. He said that in past elections, a maximum of 4% of all ballots were absentee, and the July 11, 2020, election was 19% absentee.

Representative Duplessis asked Mr. Ardoin if he was aware that 20 states had filed suit against USPS and asked if Louisiana had joined the suit. Mr. Ardoin said that he was aware of the suit but did not know if Louisiana had joined.

Representative Duplessis asked Mr. Ardoin why the language "the department of state may contract with the USPS to create a tracking system to track all absentee ballots mailed to and from voters under the emergency plan" was included in the previous emergency election plan, but not in the proposed emergency plan for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections. Mr. Ardoin replied that it was not available for them to do without a pilot program, which they would never do during a large turnout election. He said a pilot occurred in a low turnout election, hand-picking parishes with large and small populations to gauge the system before making major adjustments.

Representative Duplessis asked Mr. Ardoin if he piloted the tracking system to track absentee ballots during the July 11, 2020, and August 15, 2020, elections. Mr. Ardoin replied no.

Representative Duplessis expressed concern to Mr. Ardoin about "mega" polling locations. He feared the language would give authority to clerks of courts and parish governing authorities to close and consolidate polling locations. Mr. Ardoin explained that they already had authority to close and consolidate polling locations. His office wanted to provide an opportunity for mega polling locations to alleviate commissioner shortages and enhance social distancing.

Representative Duplessis asked Mr. Ardoin about the emergency election plan voter outreach budget and how much time would be dedicated to educating voters on the plan. Mr. Ardoin said \$100,000 was spent on media, social media, and radio advertisement for the July 11, 2020, and August 15, 2020, elections. He said the budget was \$150,000 for upcoming elections.

Representative Magee asked Mr. Ardoin if the Department of State received budget increases. Mr. Ardoin stated that the department request wasn't fully funded but they received enough to make improvements. No huge increase was received.

Representative Hodges said for the 2016 presidential election, the United States Election Commission reported that 6.5 million mail-in ballots were missing or unaccounted for. She expressed her concern that more people would request mail-in ballots for the 2020 presidential election, which could overwhelm USPS. Mr. Ardoin said if the proposed emergency election plan did not pass, it could overwhelm the registrars offices with increased absentee ballots. Mr. Ardoin said the proposed plan addressed the issues with counting the votes in a timely manner, providing enough time to process and verify absentee ballots on a parish level. He said if current law superseded the proposed plan, Louisiana would not have election results on election night.

Representative Newell asked Mr. Ardoin to explain why ballot drop-off boxes were not an option in Louisiana. Mr. Ardoin said registrars of voters were in charge of early voting sites in their parishes. He said the proposed emergency plan would allow registrars to decide if they want to offer curbside drop-off boxes outside of their offices or at central locations, and that additional voting commissioners, part-time employees, and a law enforcement officer would be at each drop-off site. For the November 3, 2020, election, curbside drop-offs would end at 4:30 p.m. the day before the election.

Representative Newell asked Mr. Ardoin about the deadline for clerks of courts to request consolidation of polling places for the November 3, 2020, election. Mr. Ardoin answered September 30, 2020. Voters would be notified on the new polling location. In the event of an emergency, by law, a parish governing authority could move a polling location.

Representative Beaulieu asked Mr. Ardoin if he believed four days was adequate to count all absentee ballots that could potentially be received and to cure ballots that needed curing. Mr. Ardoin said it was their best guesstimate.

Representative Beaulieu asked Mr. Ardoin if he believed the proposed plan would provide every citizen an equal opportunity to vote in the elections. Mr. Ardoin replied affirmatively.

John Couvillon, JMC Analytics and Polling, 1025 Chippenham Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 802-9756, testified that because of the coronavirus pandemic, there was widespread acceptance and market demand for mail-in voting. He believed this demand would not decrease for the 2020 presidential election. He said mail-in ballots were historically ~3% of the total electorate in Louisiana; approximately 19% of the total electorate cast mail-in ballots for the 2020 presidential preference primary election, which exceeded the amount of votes cast by mail in the 2016 presidential election. Mr. Couvillon estimated that 26% of votes in the August runoff would be by mail-in ballots. Mr. Couvillon believed that Secretary Ardoin accounted for the elevated levels of mail-in ballots in the proposed plan.

Ashley Shelton, Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, 13929 Kimbleton Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70817, (225) 802-2435, testified that a person's ability to vote should not be mired down by partisan politics, and the proposed plan did not provide Louisianians all available voting pathways because of fear of the coronavirus. She said Louisiana received \$7.4 million in funds to prevent, prepare, and respond to the coronavirus in preparation for the federal elections. Ms. Shelton said the proposed plan did not go far enough to achieve goals for which the funds were disbursed. She said software could have been purchased to track every ballot in the state. She said there was a large gap between what could have been done and where the plan currently stood.

Annalise Vidrine, Louisiana Vote By Mail, 1130 West Lee Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70820, (225) 390-8245, stated that Secretary Ardoin had the duty to amend the proposed emergency plan to allow all Louisianians the ability to safely exercise their right to vote in the midst of a pandemic. She stated her desire that there be a "no excuse" vote-by-mail option for all Louisiana voters, ballot drop boxes required in every parish, mandatory masks at polling places, and to allow members outside of the immediate family to hand deliver ballots for voters. Ms. Vidrine requested that measures from the July 11, 2020, and August 15, 2020, elections be extended for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections.

Charlie Stephens, Louisiana Vote By Mail, 650 North 6th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 447-1271, stated that Louisiana Vote By Mail was committed to helping the office of the secretary of state recruit more poll workers for the November 3, 2020, and December 5, 2020, elections. He stated that poll worker shortages and the lack of expansion of vote-by-mail were intertwined. Mr. Stephens stated that many people reached out to Louisiana Vote By Mail about not being able to contact the office of the secretary of state or their local clerk when applying for the position of poll worker. Mr. Stephens was opposed to the plan.

Representative Ivey, submitted a witness card in opposition to the proposed emergency election plan. Representative Ivey stated that it was the responsibility of the secretary of state to provide the best plan that would maintain election integrity, security, and safety for voters and poll workers. He said legislators should be informed decision makers and political pressures and biases should be put aside. Representative Ivey expressed his concerns with the proposed plan and did not understand why a plan was needed if what was being proposed was already in current law. Representative Ivey said if the committee did not approve the proposed plan, the secretary of state could revise it to resemble a similar or exact replica of the plan that was implemented in the July 11, 2020, and August 15, 2020, elections.

Representative Gadberry asked Representative Ivey if the committee was meeting to vote on the proposed emergency election plan. Representative Ivey replied affirmatively. He noted that Governor John Bel Edwards said he would veto the plan if it were approved by the legislature, and at that point, the courts would be involved.

Representative Hodges offered a motion to approve the emergency election plan, to which Representative Ivey objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and the motion passed by a vote of 8 yeas, 6 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Beaulieu, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Mike Johnson, Magee, and Schamerhorn voted yea. Representatives Duplessis, Ivey, Jenkins, LaCombe, Newell, and White voted nay. Representative Dwight abstained.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, 1 in opposition, and 3 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 4 in support of the emergency election plan, 192 in opposition to the emergency election plan, 257 in support of vote by mail and early voting expansion, and 39 for information only. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

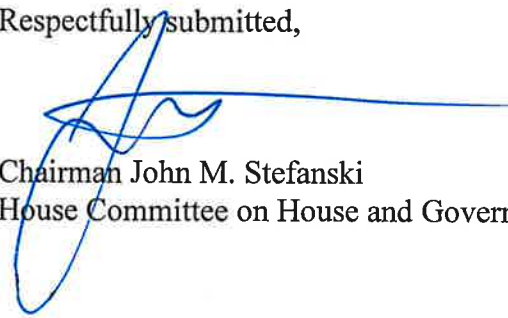
Chairman Dwight encouraged the citizens of Louisiana to complete the 2020 Census.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Duplessis offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 14 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Beaulieu, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Magee, Newell, Schamerhorn, and White voted yea. Representative Dwight abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman John M. Stefanski
House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

Date Adopted: March 17, 2022

The committee has acknowledged on March 17, 2022, that these minutes were prepared in accordance with the rules of the House of Representatives.