

House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

Minutes of Meeting
2021 Regular Session
May 26, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative John M. Stefanski, chairman of the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m. in Room 3, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative John M. Stefanski, chairman
Representative Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV
Representative Wilford Dan Carter, Sr.
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel
Representative Royce Duplessis, vice chairman
Representative Les Farnum
Representative Foy Bryan Gadberry
Representative Dodie Horton
Representative Barry Ivey
Representative Sam L. Jenkins, Jr.
Representative Michael T. Johnson
Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe
Representative Rodney Lyons
Representative Tanner D. Magee
Representative Candace N. Newell
Representative Polly Thomas
Representative Malinda B. White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Valarie Hodges

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

John Harrington, clerk
Graylin Hammond, sergeant at arms
Vivian Hurst, sergeant at arms
Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**Senate Bill No. 63 by Senator Robert Mills**

Senator Robert Mills presented Senate Bill No. 63, which requires certain absentee ballots to be delivered to an employee of the registrar of voters.

Further action was taken by the committee on Senate Bill No. 63 at a later point in the meeting. Please check for the subsequent action to complete the record of discussion and motions on Senate Bill No. 63.

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 22 by Senator Cathey

Senator Cathey presented Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 22, which requests the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors to name the basketball court in the PMAC after Coach Dale Brown.

Representative Thomas offered a motion to report Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 22 favorably. Without objection, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 22 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, Magee, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Senate Bill No. 198 by Senator Cathey

Senator Cathey presented Senate Bill No. 198, which prohibits denying access to state facilities intended for public use to persons based upon whether they have received a COVID-19 vaccination.

Representative Stefanski offered amendments to limit the effect of the bill to be only during the time period that the COVID-19 vaccinations are being administered pursuant to an emergency use authorization from the Federal Drug Administration. Representative Stefanski offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Duplessis, Farnum, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, Magee, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Jennifer Herricks, 1300 Ridge Way Drive, Mandeville, LA 70471, (713) 898-2051, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 198.

Representative Horton offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 198 with amendments, to which Representative White objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and the motion failed to pass by a vote of 6 yeas and 7 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Horton, Ivey, Mike Johnson, and Thomas voted yea. Representatives Wilford Carter, Duplessis, Jenkins, LaCombe, Lyons, Newell, and White voted nay.

Further action was taken by the committee on Senate Bill No. 198 at a later point in the meeting. Please check for the subsequent action to complete the record of discussion and motions on Senate Bill No. 198.

Senate Bill No. 63 by Senator Robert Mills

Senate Bill No. 63 requires certain absentee ballots to be delivered to an employee of the registrar of voters.

This is a continuation of the discussion on Senate Bill No. 63 from earlier in the meeting.

Representative Stefanski offered amendments to remove the mobile registration unit from locations where ballots can be hand delivered. Representative Stefanski offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Duplessis, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Magee, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Nancy Landry, first assistant secretary of state, office of the Louisiana secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 922-2880, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 63.

Representative Magee offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 63 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 63 was reported with amendments by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Magee, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support, and 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Resolution No. 51 by Representative Duplessis

Representative Duplessis presented House Resolution No. 51, which provides relative to a study of compassionate release, medical treatment furlough, and medical parole requirements.

Representative Stefanski offered amendments to:

- (1) Provide appointing authorities for members of the commission.
- (2) Add provisions regarding the first meeting of the commission.
- (3) Provide for staffing of the commission by the Louisiana Department of Health rather than the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

Nishi Kumar, Promise of Justice Initiative, 1024 Elysian Fields Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70117, (404) 617-1467, spoke in support of House Resolution No. 51.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Magee, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Representative Newell offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 51 with amendments. Without objection, House Resolution No. 51 was reported with amendments by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Magee, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 8 in support. 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: 5 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Resolution No. 74 by Representative Willard

Representative Willard presented House Resolution No. 74, which establishes the Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Innovation Caucus.

Representative Thomas offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 74 favorably. Without objection, House Resolution No. 74 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Magee, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

The committee recessed at 10:22 a.m. The committee reconvened at 10:23 a.m.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 90 by Representative Schexnayder

On behalf of Representative Schexnayder, Representative Stefanski presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 90, which provides relative to redistricting principles and criteria.

Representative Stefanski provided a handout, "Louisiana House and Senate Committee Rules for Redistricting", which is in the committee records as Exhibit A.

Vice Chairman Duplessis in the chair.

Representative Jenkins offered amendments to change the criteria relative to respecting "recognized political boundaries" to respecting "established boundaries of parishes, municipalities, and other political subdivisions" and provide that such criterion shall be subordinate to the maintenance of communities of interest within the same district, and prohibit its use to undermine the maintenance of those communities of interest to the extent practicable. Representative Jenkins offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Gadberry, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Magee, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Robert Travis Scott, Public Affairs Research Council, 450 Laurel Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70801, (225) 926-8414, spoke for information only on House Concurrent Resolution No. 90.

Evan Bergeron, Fair Districts Louisiana, 1700 Josephine Street, New Orleans, LA 70115, (985) 518-3753, spoke for information only on House Concurrent Resolution No. 90.

Melissa Flournoy, Louisiana Progress Action, 2228 Cherokee Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 936-7200, spoke in support of House Concurrent Resolution No. 90.

Peter Robins-Brown, Louisiana Progress Action, 650 North 6th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (504) 256-8196, spoke for information only on House Concurrent Resolution No. 90.

Representative Jenkins offered amendments relative to plans for the Supreme Court, to remove specific criteria which required single-member districts, districts that are substantially equal in population, and consideration of traditional district alignments. Representative Jenkins offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Newell, and White voted yea.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 90 with amendments. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 90 was reported with amendments by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Newell, and White voted yea.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 1 for information only. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

Chairman Stefanski in the chair.

House Resolution No. 73 by Representative Edmonds

House Resolution No. 73 creates and provides for the Louisiana Election Integrity Task Force.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Resolution No. 73. Without objection, action on House Resolution No. 73 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Newell, and White voted yea.

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

Senate Bill No. 198 by Senator Cathey

Senate Bill No. 198 prohibits denying access to state facilities intended for public use to persons based upon whether they have received a COVID-19 vaccination.

This is a continuation of the discussion on Senate Bill No. 198 from earlier in the meeting. Please check for the prior action to complete the record of discussion and motions on Senate Bill No. 198.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on Senate Bill No. 198. Without objection, action on Senate Bill No. 198 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Newell, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support, and 4 in opposition. 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: 5 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 219 by Senator Cloud

Senator Cloud presented Senate Bill No. 219, which provides relative to voter rolls.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on Senate Bill No. 219. Without objection, action on Senate Bill No. 219 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Newell, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support, 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: 1 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 224 by Senator Cloud

Senator Cloud presented Senate Bill No. 224, which provides for voter identification information and verification requirements.

Senator Cloud presented handouts compiled by Bryan J. Champagne, who spoke later in the meeting: "General Application for Absentee By Mail Ballot", "Military or Overseas Application for Absentee By Mail Ballot", "Address Confirmation Card", and a sample absentee by mail ballot, which are in the committee records as Exhibit B.

R. Kyle Ardoin, secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 922-2880, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 224.

Brian J. Champagne, Louisiana Registrars of Voters Association, P.O. Box 315, Hahnville, LA 70057, (985) 783-5120, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 224.

Vice Chairman Duplessis in the chair.

Terry Landry, Jr., policy director, Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund of Louisiana, 201 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70170, (504) 376-6291, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 224.

Representative Beaulieu offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 224 favorably, to which Representative Jenkins objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and Senate Bill No. 224 was reported favorably by a vote of 7 yeas, 6 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Beaulieu, Deshotel, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Mike Johnson, and Thomas voted yea. Representatives Wilford Carter, Duplessis, Jenkins, LaCombe, Newell, and White voted nay. Representative Stefanski abstained.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support, 6 in opposition, and 2 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: 2 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

Chairman Stefanski in the chair.

Senate Bill No. 220 by Senator Cloud

Senator Cloud presented Senate Bill No. 220, which provides relative to the legislative auditor.

Representative Beaulieu offered amendments relative to examinations of elections by the legislative auditor, to:

- (a) Add voter registration services as an item that may be examined.
- (b) Require that original records remain in the custody of the election official.
- (c) Remove a requirement that audit reports be submitted annually and deadlines for submission.
- (d) Require that reports be submitted to the secretary of state.
- (e) Change the deadline for presentation of reports to legislative committees.
- (f) Delay the effective date of proposed law.

R. Kyle Ardoin, secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 922-2880, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 220.

Thomas Cole, office of the Louisiana legislative auditor, no witness card provided, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 220.

Representative Beaulieu offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Representative Beaulieu offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 220 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 220 was reported with amendments by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support, 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: 1 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Newell offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Date adopted: