

House Committee on Appropriations

Minutes of Meeting
2022 Regular Session
May 16, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman
Representative Tony Bacala
Representative Barbara W. Carpenter
Representative R. Dewith Carrier
Representative Raymond J. Crews
Representative Mary DuBuisson
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman
Representative Brett F. Geymann
Representative Jason Hughes
Representative John R. Illg, Jr.
Representative Timothy P. Kerner
Representative Rodney Lyons
Representative C. Denise Marcelle
Representative Jack G. McFarland
Representative Blake Miguez
Representative Troy D. Romero
Representative Christopher Turner
Representative Debbie Villio
Representative William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Roy Daryl Adams
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel
Representative Dustin Miller
Representative Francis C. Thompson, vice chairman

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dazia Briscoe, committee administrative assistant
Stephanie Little, attorney

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

None

III. BUSINESS**Senate Bill No. 5 by Senator Price**

Senator Price presented Senate Bill No. 5, which grants a nonrecurring lump-sum supplemental payment to certain eligible retirees and beneficiaries.

Ms. Tina Grant, Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System (LASERS), 8401 United Plaza Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 270-2512, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 5.

Representative Hughes offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 5 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 5 was reported favorably by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, McFarland, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat 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.

Representative Bacala stated that he had a potential conflict of interest and recused himself from voting on Senate Bill No. 6.

Senate Bill No. 6 by Senator Price

Senator Price presented Senate Bill No. 6, which grants a permanent benefit increase to eligible system retirees and beneficiaries.

Ms. Katherine Whitney, Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL), 8401 United Plaza Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 925-6454, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 6.

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 6 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 6 was reported favorably by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue,

Crews, Edmonds, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 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: 1 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 7 by Senator Price

Senator Price presented Senate Bill No. 7, which grants a permanent benefit increase to system retirees and beneficiaries.

Ms. Margaret Michel, Louisiana State Police Retirement System (LSPRS), 9224 Jefferson Highway, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 925-8400, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 7.

Representative Illg offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 7 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 7 was reported favorably by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat 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.

Senate Bill No. 277 by Senator Cortez

Senator Cortez presented Senate Bill No. 277, which creates the Megaprojects Leverage Fund.

Representative Zeringue offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes.
- (2) Add provisions removing bonds issued pursuant to proposed law from the calculation of "net state tax supported debt".
- (3) Add a provision specifying that the portion of tax avails dedicated pursuant to present law to the Construction Subfund of the Transportation Trust Fund is also dedicated to the Megaprojects Leverage Fund created in proposed law.

- (4) Add provisions allowing monies that would otherwise be deposited into an account created in proposed law to be diverted to other accounts in the event the secretary of the Dept. of Transportation and Development determines that it is not in the best interests of the state to proceed with the project associated with that account and submits a request not to proceed with the project to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation, Highways and Public Works, which both approve that request.

Representative Zeringue offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 18 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Secretary Shawn Wilson, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), 1201 Capital Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 379-1200, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 277.

Senator Ward, District 17, 3741 Highway 1, Port Allen, LA 70767, (225) 246-8838, spoke in sponsorship of Senate Bill No. 277.

Representative Romero offered amendments to add provisions specifying that the LA Highway 1 and LA Highway 30 connectors are part of the Baton Rouge bridge project pursuant to proposed law. Representative Turner offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 18 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, Miguez, Romero, Turner, and Villio voted yea.

Representative Marcelle offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 277 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 277 was reported with amendments by a vote of 20 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 9 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 266 by Senator Ward

Senator Ward presented Senate Bill No. 266, which provides for utilization of certain monies in the Construction Subfund of the Transportation Trust Fund for federal match.

Representative Zeringue offered amendments to remove proposed provisions that authorize the department to utilize a certain amount of monies deposited into the subfund for projects authorized pursuant to present law (R.S. 48:224.1) relative to the transfer and exchange of state and local roads.

Representative Zeringue offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 19 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 266 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 266 was reported with amendments by a vote of 19 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 5 in support and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 490 by Senator Cortez

On behalf of Senator Cortez, Senator Milligan presented Senate Bill No. 490, which provides for security services in the state capitol building.

Representative Zeringue offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes.
- (2) Specify that president of the Senate appoints the initial chairman and the speaker of the House appoints the initial vice chairman of the council.
- (3) Change the deadline regarding the appointment of the council each term from 90 days from the convening of the regular session to within 20 days of the adjournment of the organizational session.

Representative Zeringue offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 17 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Representative Hughes offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 490 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 490 was reported with amendments by a vote of 19 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman,

Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

House Bill No. 756 by Representative Schexnayder

On behalf of Representative Schexnayder, Representative Zeringue presented House Bill No. 756, which provides relative to certain public buildings and grounds.

Representative Zeringue offered amendments to make technical changes. Representative Zeringue offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Crews, Edmonds, Freeman, Hughes, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Mr. Jay Dardenne, Division of Administration, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-2000, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 756.

Ms. Nancy Watkins, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, 1051 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-8201, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 756.

Representative Zeringue offered a motion to report House Bill No. 756 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 756 was reported with amendments by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Carpenter, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

House Bill No. 394 by Representative Stagni

Representative Stagni presented House Bill No. 394, which provides relative to the salaries of registrars of voters and their chief deputies and confidential assistants.

Mr. Steve Raborn, Louisiana Registrars of Voters Association, P.O. Box 91006, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 389-3940, spoke in support of House Bill No. 394.

Representative Villio offered a motion to report House Bill No. 394 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 394 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Crews, DuBuisson, Freeman, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 12 in support and 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 15 by Senator Fred Mills

Senator Fred Mills presented Senate Bill No. 15, which provides relative to contracts for fiscal intermediary services.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 15 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 15 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Crews, DuBuisson, Freeman, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Senate Bill No. 16 by Senator Fred Mills

Senator Fred Mills presented Senate Bill No. 16, which provides relative to the Video Draw Poker Device Fund.

Mr. Chester Cedars, St. Martin Parish Government, P.O. Box 9, St. Martinville, LA 70582, (337) 519-1508, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 16.

Mr. Becket Breaux, St. Martin Parish Sheriff's Office, 400 St. Martin Street, St. Martinville, LA 70582, (337) 394-3071, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 16.

Representative Miguez offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 16 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 16 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, DuBuisson, Freeman, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, McFarland, Miguez, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 6 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 537 by Representative Davis

Representative Davis presented House Bill No. 537, which requires health insurance coverage for infertility treatments.

Ms. Julie Stokes, Cancer Advocacy Group of Louisiana, 13 Chateau Rue Du Jardin Street, Kenner, LA 70065, (504) 250-8113, spoke in support of House Bill No. 537.

Colonel David Couvillion, office of group benefits (OGB), 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9670, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 537.

Mr. Jeff Drozda, Louisiana Association of Health Plans, 450 Laurel Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70801, no phone number provided, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 537.

Mr. Ben Clapper, Louisiana Right to Life, 200 Allen Toussaint Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70124, (504) 835-6520, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 537.

Representative Freeman offered a motion to report House Bill No. 537 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 537 was reported favorably by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Carrier, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, McFarland, Miguez, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 5 in opposition and 1 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 opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 103 by Representative Wright

Representative Wright presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 103, which directs the Cash Management Review Board to consider and report on ways the state can utilize cryptocurrency.

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 103 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 103 was reported favorably by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Carrier, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, McFarland, Miguez, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

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

House Bill No. 911 by Representative Hughes

Representative Hughes presented House Bill No. 911, which provides relative to early literacy.

Representative Hughes offered amendments to make technical changes. Representative Hughes offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Carrier, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, McFarland, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Representative DuBuisson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 911 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 911 was reported with amendments by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Carrier, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Kerner, Lyons, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 13 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 412 by Representative Goudeau

Representative Goudeau presented House Bill No. 412, which provides relative to the verification of attendance at employment interviews.

Ms. Patrice Thomas, Louisiana Fiscal Office (LFO), 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7181, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 412.

Representative DuBuisson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 412 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 412 was reported favorably by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support and 1 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 499 by Representative Amedee

Representative Zeringue voluntarily deferred House Bill No. 499, which creates a fund for the purpose of funding tuition exemptions and reduction of textbook costs for persons who are age fifty-five or older.

Representative Zeringue offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 499. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 499 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 968 by Representative Phelps

Representative Zeringue voluntarily deferred House Bill No. 968, which establishes a state sickle cell disease registry.

Representative Zeringue offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 968. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 968 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Colonel David Couvillion, office of group benefits (OGB), 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9670, spoke for information only on the contract between the office of group benefits and Access Health, Inc.

Representative Wheat offered a motion to approve a request to modify the contract between the office of group benefits and Access Health, Inc., in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 42:802(D)(2). Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, McFarland, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Romero offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, McFarland, Miguez, Romero, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Jerome "Zee" Zeringue
House Committee on Appropriations