

## House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice

Minutes of Meeting  
2024 Regular Session  
April 16, 2024

### I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Debbie Villio, chair of the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in Room 6, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### II. ROLL CALL

#### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Debbie Villio, chair  
Representative Roy Daryl Adams  
Representative Tony Bacala  
Representative Chad Michael Boyer  
Representative Vincent E. Cox, III  
Representative Bryan Fontenot  
Representative Dodie Horton  
Representative Alonzo L. Knox  
Representative Vanessa Caston LaFleur, vice chair  
Representative Patricia "Pat" Moore  
Representative Lauren Ventrella  
Representative Joy Walters  
Representative Jeffrey Fons "Jeff" Wiley

#### MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

#### STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Zachary Gonzalez, attorney  
Stephanie Weinman, committee administrative assistant

#### ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Janet Anthony, sergeant at arms  
Michael McCain, clerk  
Robert Singletary, attorney

### III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

#### **House Bill No. 67 by Representative Domangue**

Representative Domangue presented House Bill No. 67, which provides an exception to the crime of illegal carrying of weapons for certain persons.

Representative Villio offered amendments to :

- (1) Make technical changes;
- (2) Add the following individuals who, whether in active or former service, are exempt from the crime of illegal carrying of weapons if qualified annually in the use of firearms by P.O.S.T.:
  - (a) The governor;
  - (b) The lieutenant governor;
  - (c) The secretary of state;
  - (d) The treasurer;
  - (e) The commissioner of agriculture;
  - (f) The commissioner of insurance; and
- (3) Remove police jury presidents from the list of certain persons who are exempt from the crime of illegal carrying of weapons when qualified annually by P.O.S.T.

Representative Villio offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Representative Cox offered a motion to report House Bill No. 67 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 67 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

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

**House Bill No. 228 by Representative Bayham**

Representative Bayham presented House Bill No. 228, which provides relative to the disposition of a motor vehicle used in a crime.

Representative Adams offered a motion to report House Bill No. 228 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 228 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, Moore, Walters, and Wiley 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. 128 by Representative Fontenot**

Representative Fontenot presented House Bill No. 128, which provides relative to possession of a firearm by a felon.

Representative Fontenot offered an amendment to restore the present law five-year minimum term of imprisonment. Representative Fontenot offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendment. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Michael Ranatza, executive director, Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, 1175 Nicholson Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in support of House Bill No. 128.

Ronald Marshall, Voice of the Experienced, 4930 Washington Ave., New Orleans, LA 70125, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 128.

Sarah Whittington, Justice and Accountability Center of Louisiana, 4035 Washington Ave., New Orleans, LA 70125, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 128.

Representative Fontenot offered a motion to report House Bill No. 128 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 128 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support and 8 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

**House Bill No. 823 by Representative Bacala**

Representative Bacala presented House Bill No. 823, which provides relative to the illegal carrying of weapons.

Representative Bacala offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes;
- (2) Provide that the crime of illegal carrying of weapons includes the intentional possession or use of a dangerous weapon by any person in any of the following locations:
  - (a) A law enforcement office, station, or building;
  - (b) A detention facility, prison, or jail;
  - (c) A courthouse or courtroom, provided that a judge may carry such a weapon in his own courtroom;
  - (d) The state capitol building; and
- (3) Clarify that the crime of illegal carrying of weapons does not apply to a peace officer as defined by present law in the performance of his official duties.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report House Bill No. 823 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 823 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley 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. 850 by Representative Mike Johnson**

On behalf of the author, Representative Villio offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 850, which provides relative to the removal of unauthorized persons from immovable property. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 850 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 11

yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

### **House Bill No. 730 by Representative Mena**

At the request of the author, Representative Villio offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 730, which creates "The Fairness and Safety Act for Louisiana Incarcerated Workers". Without objection, action on House Bill No. 730 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

### **House Bill No. 189 by Representative Willard**

Representative Willard presented House Bill No. 189, which provides for civilian investigators to oversee taped statements of protected persons.

On behalf of the author, Representative Villio offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes;
- (2) Clarify the definition of a "civilian investigator" within present law;
- (3) Add and define the term "civilian investigator" within the Children's Code;
- (4) Add a civilian investigator as a person who can supervise a videotaping of a protected person's statement pursuant to the Children's Code in order to render the videotape as competent evidence; and
- (5) Clarify that proposed law, relative to a civilian investigator's ability to render a videotape as competent evidence, shall only apply to a civilian investigator within a parish with a population of not less than 343,000 and not more than 384,000.

Representative Villio offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Lieutenant Sheila Celious, New Orleans Police Department, 701 Loyola Ave., New Orleans, LA 70113, spoke in support of House Bill No. 189.

Representative Knox offered a motion to report House Bill No. 189 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 189 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays.

Representatives Villio, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 14 in support and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

*Vice Chair LaFleur in the chair.*

The committee stood at ease at 10:07 a.m. The committee reconvened at 10:10 a.m.

### **House Bill No. 851 by Representative Phelps**

Representative Phelps presented House Bill No. 851, which creates the crime of tax sale property fraud.

Representative Adams offered a motion to report House Bill No. 851 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 851 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Adams, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley 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. 874 by Representative Kerner**

Representative Kerner presented House Bill No. 874, which provides relative to electronic monitoring.

On behalf of the author, Representative Horton offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes;
- (2) Prohibit the following persons from being a vendor, or having a financial interest in a vendor, for electronic monitoring services in this state:
  - (a) Any sheriff;
  - (b) Any district attorney;
  - (c) Any judge; and
  - (d) An immediate family member of any sheriff, district attorney, or judge;

Representative Horton offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Representative Adams offered a motion to report House Bill No. 874 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 874 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Adams, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, LaFleur, Moore, Walters, and Wiley voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 23 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 874 pursuant to House Rule 14.33.

The committee stood at ease at 10:21 a.m. The committee reconvened at 10:23 a.m.

#### **House Bill No. 545 by Representative Amedee**

Representative Amedee presented House Bill No. 545, which provides relative to certain materials in public school libraries.

Anna Gauthier, 950 Azalea St., Lafayette, LA 70506, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 545.

Melany Champagne, 102 Saw Lake Ln., Lafayette, LA 70508, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 545.

Kelsye Baudoin, 104 Saint Lucius St., Youngsville, LA 70592, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 545.

Lynette Mejia, Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship, 151 Schoeffler Rd., Carencro, LA 70520, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 545, and provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Michael Holt, 1236 Rockport St., Zachary, LA 70791, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 545.

Representative Knox offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 545. Representative Fontenot offered a substitute motion to report House Bill No. 545 favorably, to which Representative Walters objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and House Bill No. 545 was reported favorably by a vote of 8 yeas and 4 nays. Representatives Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Fontenot, Horton, Moore, Ventrella, and Wiley voted yea. Representatives Cox, Knox, LaFleur, and Walters voted nay.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 6 in support and 17 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 545 pursuant to House Rule 14.33.

*Chair Villio in the chair.*

### **House Bill No. 819 by Representative Ventrella**

Representative Ventrella presented House Bill No. 819, which provides relative to the burden of proof when the justification of self-defense is raised.

Representative Ventrella offered amendments to:

- (1) Make technical changes;
- (2) Provide that any person who asserts the defense of self-defense shall provide reasonable notice to the prosecution in advance of trial asserting such defense; and
- (3) Clarify the burden of proof if the defense of self-defense is raised in a civil proceeding by an authorized person as defined in present law.

Representative Ventrella offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Fontenot, Horton, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Ventrella, and Wiley voted yea.

Kurt Wall, 21st Judicial District Attorney's Office, 20300 Government Blvd., Livingston, LA 70754, spoke in support of House Bill No. 819.

Everett C. Baudean, Louisiana Shooting Association, 704 S. Foster Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, spoke in support of House Bill No. 819.

Bruce Reilly, Voice of the Experienced, 4930 Washington Ave., New Orleans, LA 70125, spoke in support of House Bill No. 819.

Jarrett Ambeau, 8460 Bluebonnet Blvd., Ste. A, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, spoke in support of House Bill No. 819.

Representative Knox offered a motion to report House Bill No. 819 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 819 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Villio, Adams, Bacala, Boyer, Cox, Knox, LaFleur, Moore, Ventrella, and Wiley voted yea.



Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 8 in support and 2 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

#### **IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Debbie Villio  
House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice