

House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

Minutes of Meeting
2024 Regular Session
May 14, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV, chair of the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, called the meeting to order at 9:51 a.m. in Room 2, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV, chair
Representative Michael Robert "Mike" Bayham, Jr.
Representative Beth Anne Billings
Representative Delisha Boyd
Representative Wilford Dan Carter, Sr.
Representative Jessica Domangue
Representative Les Farnum
Representative Foy Bryan Gadberry
Representative Ed Larvadain, III
Representative Rodney Lyons, vice chair
Representative C. Denise Marcelle
Representative Candace N. Newell
Representative Rodney Wayne Schamerhorn
Representative Polly Thomas
Representative John E. Wyble

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Mark Wright

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patricia Lowrey-Dufour, legislative analyst
Annie Smith, attorney
Sarah Baker, committee administrative assistant
Caroline Vanhoose, clerk

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Vivian Hurst, sergeant at arms
Cheryl Domino, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**Senate Bill No. 149 by Senator Fields**

Senator Fields presented Senate Bill No. 149, which provides relative to the powers, duties, and functions of the Louisiana State Archives.

Representative Beaulieu offered technical amendments to Senate Bill No. 149. Representative Beaulieu offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Catherine Newsome, office of the secretary of the state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 149.

Representative Larvadain offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 149 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 149 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 14 in support, and 3 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 384 by Senator Fields

Senator Fields presented Senate Bill No. 384, which provides relative to voter identification requirements.

Representative Beaulieu offered amendments to:

1. Remove provisions related to the recordation of deficiencies in voter identification affidavits used during early voting.
2. Add the requirement that the registrar record the reason for the rejection of challenged early voting and absentee by mail ballots in certain circumstances.

Representative Beaulieu offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Sherri Hadskey, office of the secretary of the state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 384.

Representative Newell offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 384 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 384 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Marcelle, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 20 in support, 2 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 497 by Senator Miguez

Representative Gadberry in the chair.

Senator Miguez presented Senate Bill No. 497, which amends provisions concerning selection of members of the Board of Ethics.

Representative Gadberry offered amendments to provide for the method for filling vacancies. Representative Gadberry offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bayham, Billings, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Marcelle, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Brittney Richardson, NOA Delta Sigma Theta, no address provided, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 497.

Barry Erwin, Council for a Better Louisiana, P.O. Box 4308, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 497.

Steven Procopio, PAR, 450 Laurel Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70801, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 497.

Chair Beaulieu in the chair.

Representative Wyble offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 497 with amendments, to which Representative Newell objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and Senate Bill No. 497

was reported with amendments by a vote of 7 yeas and 6 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, and Wyble voted yea. Representatives Wilford Carter, Larvadain, Lyons, Marcelle, Newell, and Thomas voted nay.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support, and 11 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 497 pursuant to House Rule 14.33.

Senate Bill No. 261 by Senator Hodges

On behalf of Senator Hodges, Representative Bayham presented Senate Bill No. 261, which provides for additional poll watchers at polling places for elections.

Representative Bayham offered amendments to:

1. Delete a provision authorizing the state central committee of certain recognized political parties to have one watcher at every precinct on election day where a candidate affiliated with the party is on the ballot.
2. Authorize the parish executive committee, rather than the state central committee, of certain recognized political parties to select super watchers for election day and watchers in each parish during early voting.
3. Authorize the chairman of the state central committee of certain recognized political parties to designate watchers and super watchers for any parish without a parish executive committee.

Representative Bayham offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Marcelle, Newell, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Catherine Newsome, office of the secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 261.

Sherri Hadskey, office of the secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 261.

Steve Raborn, Louisiana Registrars of Voters Association, P.O. Box 91006, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 261.

Bert Callais, 363 East St. Francis Street, Brusly, LA 70719, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 261.

Representative Bayham offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on Senate Bill No. 261. Without objection, action on Senate Bill No. 261 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Boyd, Wilford Carter, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Marcelle, Newell, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, 26 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 400 by Senator Fields

On behalf of Senator Fields, Representative Marcelle presented Senate Bill No. 400, which provides relative to election sections for judgeship of the family court for East Baton Rouge Parish.

Judge Ronald R. Johnson, 300 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70801, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 400.

Vice Chair Lyons in the chair.

Judge Hunter Green, 1600 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 400.

Judge Pamela Baker, East Baton Rouge Family Court Division A, 400 North Boulevard, Suite 4111, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 400.

Chair Beaulieu in the chair.

Representative Marcelle offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on Senate Bill No. 400. Without objection, action on Senate Bill No. 400 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Boyd, Wilford Carter, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Marcelle, Newell, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 23 in support, and 6 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Vice Chair Lyons in the chair.

Representative Lyons offered a motion to adopt a three-minute rule for member questions and witness testimony. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Boyd, Wilford Carter, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Senate Bill No. 13 by Senator Seabaugh

On behalf of Senator Seabaugh, Representative Beaulieu presented Senate Bill No. 13, which prohibits an elected official who has been removed from office from filling the vacancy created by the removal.

Sherri Hadskey, office of the secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 13.

Lanie Boyd, no witness card provided, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 13.

Representative Thomas offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 13 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 13 was reported favorably by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Boyd, Wilford Carter, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, and 8 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 449 by Senator Seabaugh

On behalf of Senator Seabaugh, Representative Beaulieu presented Senate Bill No. 449, which defines certain terms in the election code.

Nancy Landry, office of the secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 449.

Representative Farnum offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 449 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 449 was reported favorably by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Boyd, Wilford Carter, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, 3 in opposition, and 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 357 by Senator Seabaugh

On behalf of Senator Seabaugh, Representative Beaulieu presented Senate Bill No. 357, which provides relative to termination of a public health emergency.

Representative Beaulieu offered amendments to remove a provision for the prospective and retroactive application of the Act. 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 Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Boyd, Wilford Carter, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

Representative Farnum offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 357 with amendments, to which Representative Newell objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and Senate Bill No. 357 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas and 5 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea. Representatives Boyd, Wilford Carter, Larvadain, Lyons, and Newell voted nay.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 9 in support, and 2 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Prepared statements were received via email for House Bill No. 357 pursuant to House Rule 14.33.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Beaulieu announced that Committee Room 3 would be available as an overflow room.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Newell offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Beaulieu, Bayham, Billings, Boyd, Wilford Carter, Domangue, Farnum, Gadberry, Larvadain, Lyons, Newell, Schamerhorn, Thomas, and Wyble voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV
House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

Date adopted: