



Response to Girl Scouts Louisiana East...

LOUISIANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Committee on Ways & Means

Wednesday, April 25, 2018 • Contact: Cory Stewart (225) 342-9795

On April 24, a lobbyist representing the Girl Scouts Louisiana East (GSLE), issued a factually misleading and incendiary press release that accused members of the Louisiana House Ways and Means Committee, and the Committee as a whole, of showing preferential treatment for the Louisiana Boy Scouts. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The real truth is that the GSLE was perceived to have missed the legal deadline for submitting a Capital Outlay request according to the Governor's Office, Division of Administration, which is responsible for those matters. The GSLE project therefore was omitted from the Capital Outlay budget as prepared and submitted by the Governor's Office to the Legislature. Additionally, the GSLE failed to obtain a necessary waiver for late submission when, during a meeting of the Committee in January, the local state representative for the project objected to the waiver request due to other critical projects in that area needing funding.

So, when the Committee considered the proposal to amend the Capital Outlay budget on Monday to include the GSLE project, the status of the project was that it was ineligible for funding and including it in the budget would have been in violation of Louisiana law and statutory funding guidelines.

Committee members from both parties expressed concerns for that reason and indicated that they wanted more information regarding the GSLE's claim that their application was not late. The Committee's concerns had absolutely nothing to do with choosing one scout organization over another but, were rather related to following the rule of law. The amendment was ultimately withdrawn (and never voted upon) and the Committee passed the budget to the House floor.

The next day, the Governor's Office, through the Division of Administration, advised the Committee that they re-checked the GSLE's

application after the hearing and that a mistake had been made in declaring the project untimely. While the Administration's error was unfortunate, the Committee will continue to work with the GSLE to find a remedy. The Committee resoundingly condemned the unprofessional accusation levied by the GSLE lobbyist in its press release, that their actions were rooted in something other than dedication to proper legal procedure. The Girl Scouts, at a national and local level, is not only a worthy organization, but an important part of our community. That fact is well established and universally agreed upon.

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