



Representative Paula P. Davis

District 69

August 2020 District Update

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and sound. We cannot let normal life grind to a halt during these unprecedented times, and we cannot allow toxic politics to divide us. Please do your best to stop the spread of COVID, keep businesses and places of worship open, and help our children return safely to school.

Working around COVID, we passed some really good legislation during the past sessions. In general, we have a balanced state budget, authorized nearly \$6 billion for needed infrastructure projects, and set aside \$106 million in the Capital Outlay Savings Fund restricted to capital outlay projects. We also distributed Coronavirus Relief Fund money to provide economic support for Louisiana businesses, cover eligible COVID expenses incurred by state agencies and local governments, and make a one-time payment to critical workers.



The ideas behind many bills originate from all sorts of sources like business and industry, local governments, and citizen advocacy groups. For example, the [Civil Justice Reform Act of 2020](#) was a big deal that should create a major change in how the public and business leaders across the country perceive Louisiana's business climate, and should hopefully reduce the high cost of auto insurance. The passage of the Act was a complete team effort involving input from a cross-section of attorneys, judges, businesspeople and citizens primarily led by [Speaker Clay Schexnayder](#) and [Rep. John Stefanski](#). The new law improves how we handle jury trials, medical bills, evidence of damages, and failure to wear seat belts.

We also helped our rural areas by passing [SB 10](#), which will help deliver broadband data transmission, while protecting private property rights. With so many people working from home and some students schooling at home due to COVID, we need to make sure we have adequate internet service across Louisiana. This bill came through my [Commerce committee](#) and was led by [Sen. Beth Mizell](#) and [Rep. Daryl Deshotel](#).

Patients suffering from any debilitating medical conditions will now be able to see their own doctor through a significant change in Louisiana's medical marijuana law. [HB 819](#) by [Rep. Larry Bagley](#) addressed a bottle-neck that prevented enough doctors from participating in the program. Starting August 1, any physician licensed by and in good standing with the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners may recommend medical marijuana to any patient suffering from any condition that the physician considers debilitating to his patient. The bill was co-authored by 25 Republicans, Democrats and Independents, got a supermajority vote in the House and Senate, and included necessary safeguards.



I volunteer on the Board of Directors of [The Arc Baton Rouge](#), a non-profit that focuses on improving the lives of people with disabilities. I was honored to author the [Dustin Gary Act](#) approving the use of “Supported Decision-making Agreements” for adults with disabilities as an alternative to a more restrictive interdiction or tutorship arrangement. [The new law named after Dustin Gary should clear the way for more independent living for those with disabilities.](#)

You know I enjoy examining voting results to give me more insight into what Dist. 69 constituents are thinking. On Saturday, July 11, East Baton Rouge Parish renewed the millage that funds about 17% of the Sheriff’s Office operating budget. This funding supports the EBRPSO’s 24-hour patrols, school response, community out-reach and policing, securing and rehabilitating all persons booked in parish prison, courthouse and courtroom activities, and civil service activities. The parish-wide vote was 53% in favor of renewing the law enforcement millage. In 28 of 33 precincts in Dist. 69, the average vote in support was about 66%. In the other five precincts in Dist. 69, the millage narrowly failed with about 48%. This outcome tells me that the overwhelming majority of voters in Dist. 69 support appropriately funding our law enforcement.

Finally, we are currently experiencing one of the harshest political climates creating less viewpoint diversity and ultra-negative communication. It seems like we cannot have a constructive conversation anymore. Sure, looking over my voting history since 2016 shows that I have one of the more conservative voting records in the Louisiana legislature. For example, the [American Conservative Union Foundation](#) recently presented me with the Conservative Excellence award recognizing my voting record in support of limited and transparent government, individual rights, personal responsibility, and lasting cultural values. But, as you have seen from my actions, my conservatism hasn’t stopped me from being reasonable and open-minded, working with all of my colleagues to solve complex legislative problems, or prevented me from championing issues of concern in our state and community.

Thank you for your continued support. Please continue to send me your thoughts and suggestions.

All the best,

Paula

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