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## First Issue of 2023

# WHO'S GONNA RUN?

## *Announcements for #LaGov coming*

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- **BILLY'S MOMENT:** Lt. Gov. **Billy Nungesser** commissioned **Greg Rigamer's** BDPC for a poll (12/7-12/13) that the well-known politico is now using to make his final decision about running for governor. Nungesser said he will make his intentions known on Tuesday, Jan. 10. "You have to see a pathway to victory," Nungesser told *The Tracker*. "That's why I'm encouraged by the high positives and low negatives in this poll, which is always good to see." The Nungesser campaign provided the poll (603 likely voters/4 percent error margin/52 percent cell/48 percent landline) to *The Tracker*, but not for distribution to subscribers. Among issues for the 2023 statewide cycle, voters rated jobs and education as the top two issues, respectively, ahead of crime and immigration. The poll participants also heavily favored a Republican governor for next term. Here's the primary mockup Nungesser (not surprisingly) has shared with donors: Nungesser, 23 percent; DOTD Chief **Shawn Wilson**, 23 percent; Attorney General **Jeff Landry**, 22 percent; Not Sure, 21 percent; Sen. **Sharon Hewitt**, 3 percent; Refused, 3 percent; **Hunter Lundy**, 2 percent; and Treasurer **John Schroder**, 2 percent. So what is Nungesser going to say next week? "I love what I do," Nungesser said during a brief interview Tuesday, his voice still hoarse

from his recent visit to the Rose Bowl Parade. “It’s a tough choice for me.”

- **WAITING ON JNK:** U.S. Sen. **John Kennedy** said he would make his own final decision about governor in early January. Reached for guidance yesterday on when that might be, Kennedy's comms team offered little in the way of a preview. Nungesser’s poll (mentioned above), however, did have one relevant question regarding the junior senator— 43 percent said Kennedy should stay in Washington. (Read Kennedy’s own topline poll results and cross-tabs, published in the last issue of *The Tracker*).
- **ALSO THE TREASURER:** Also in the mix is Treasurer **John Schroder**, who was expected to make an announcement next Thursday, Jan. 12. That now hinges on when U.S. Sen. **John Kennedy** makes his decision. “I will not announce my plans until JNK makes his decision,” Schroder said via text Tuesday.
- **THE REST OF THE BUNCH:** Aside from the names listed above, those who spent the last year saying they might run include Congressman **Garret Graves**, West Feliciana Parish President **Kenny Havard**, state Rep. **Richard Nelson** of Mandeville, state Sen. **Gary Smith** of Norco and former U.S. Attorney **Donald Washington** of Lafayette.

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**“Why Louisiana Ain’t Mississippi...”**

## or Any Place Else!”

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*Our people’s deep connections to Louisiana history are an important part of why we contribute economically and culturally to the state we love. Our tribe is proud to contribute major financial support to LPB’s latest work, which also features our chairman, **Jonathan Cernek**, talking about our people’s history in Louisiana before colonization. We’re honored to be a part of telling Louisiana’s story in a way that honors our people and our cultural contributions. This two-part special, “Why Louisiana Ain’t Mississippi... or Any Place Else!,” showcases Louisiana’s significance on the world stage.*

### **Part I**

You can’t talk about Louisiana without talking about water, especially the mighty Mississippi River. It was the life source for many of the Native Americans who inhabited this land for thousands of years before colonization. On this first night, we begin at Louisiana’s beginning, exploring places such as Poverty Point, the swamps of Acadiana and visit the Coushatta Pow-Wow. Plus, the founding of New Orleans, which becomes the port gateway to the New World long before Ellis Island.

### **Part II**

Napoleon makes the sale of the century. More people come to Louisiana from all parts of the world producing an amazing culture full of talented artists, soulful musicians, bombastic politicians and some of the biggest names in sports. Explore our history through the stories of Shreveport’s Municipal Auditorium, the rich New Orleans music scene with Irma Thomas, Winnfield’s Louisiana Political Museum, and more, for some of the most memorable moments in Louisiana’s inimitable history.

*[Click here](#) to learn more about our support for this programming and stream both parts of this important documentary.*

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## **POLITICAL CHATTER**

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- **TOP STORY/DC VOTES:** Turn it on C-SPAN to find out who might be — or might not be — the next speaker of the U.S. House. Being second in the line of succession for the presidency ain’t no joke. Congressman **Kevin McCarthy** is expected to make another push on another ballot today. How long this might last is unknown, but every moment it endures, folks in Louisiana will wonder if the time has

finally come for Congressman **Steve Scalise** to capture the big gavel as a compromise candidate.

- **TODAY ON THE HILL:** According to the schedule released by Majority Leader **Steve Scalise**, the House will gather at noon (DC time) for the election of the next speaker and the swearing-in of members. If things get that far, lawmakers may also take up the new rules for the 118th Congress and HR23, the Family and Small Business Taxpayer Protection Act.
  - **THREE DECADES OF POLITICS:** This year marks the 30th anniversary of *LaPolitics Weekly*, Louisiana's oldest trade publication for elected officials and political professionals. Don't miss out on the celebration this year! Subscribe today at [www.LaPoliticsWeekly.com](http://www.LaPoliticsWeekly.com).
  - **SPECIAL DC MARDI GRAS ISSUE:** *LaPolitics Weekly* will once again publish a print-only Washington Mardi Gras edition, to be distributed to rooms affiliated with the extravaganza. You'll also find copies in your hotel lobby on Friday, Jan. 27. Want to be a part of the big issue? Have some breaking news you want to put before the most influential readership in Louisiana? There's no better way to make a splash at the state's premier political event. Send your news ideas and story pitches to [JJA@LaPolitics.com](mailto:JJA@LaPolitics.com).
  - **MOON EXPANDS FOOTPRINT:** Via KPEL: "**Moon Griffon**, who hosts 'The Moon Griffon Show,' will be expanding his radio presence as he will now be heard on a Baton Rouge radio station. For years, people in other markets have expressed that they want to hear 'The Moon Griffon Show' on their local radio station, and for those people who live Baton Rouge along with the surrounding areas, they will have the chance to hear his show live. The new market will have the show featured on WBRP-FM, 107.3 FM."
  - **TODAY'S FUNDRAISER:** **Justin Centanni**, a candidate for Lafayette Parish assessor, has a 5:30 p.m. event at the home of **Julie Rosenzweig** and Dr. **Seth Rosenzweig** in Broussard.
  - **MEETINGS:** The Louisiana State Boxing and Wrestling Commission meets Wednesday... So does the Cash Management Review Board... The Atchafalaya Basin Program Technical Advisory Group meets Friday... The Disability Voting Task Force meets Monday...
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## HEADLINES & BYLINES

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- The Advocate: Louisiana regulators continue allowing weak insurers to take on risky policies
- Washington Post: 'You're a slave': Inside Louisiana's forced prison labor and a failed overhaul attempt
- PEW: Finally, Something Lawmakers Can (Mostly) Agree On: State Symbols
- Advertiser: Louisiana officials escalate TikTok bans as concerns grow over China's influence
- WVLA: New Louisiana laws in effect in 2023
- The Advocate: Oil, insurance, traffic, pot - Louisiana's congressional delegation takes aim at 2023
- The Advocate: Clean sweep? Louisiana may be in line for big grant to create regional hydrogen hub
- WVLA: Louisiana SNAP, two other benefits decreasing for some in 2023

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## OPINION COLUMN:

### The Legislative Pay Issue

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The upcoming regular session slated to convene April 10 would be both the most ridiculous time and — maybe — the most opportune for members of the Legislature to discuss increasing their own pay.

On one hand, lawmakers will face reelection just a few months later, in October, and an unexpected proposal to hike their own salaries may not sit well with voters. Plus, more than a few critics will find little comfort in senators and representatives boosting elected pay before raising the minimum wage.

On the other hand, this could be the last regular session for quite some time where lawmakers will find a sympathetic ear in the Governor's Mansion. When he was a state representative in 2008, Gov. **John Bel Edwards** voted in favor of raising the annual base salary of legislators from \$16,800 to \$37,000.

That failed 2008 pay raise package remains a legendary case study in politics and policymaking. Lawmakers and the administration of former Gov. Bobby Jindal worked overtime to forge a compromise on the issue and both sides gave their respective word.

When the public pushed back, however, Jindal changed his mind — but only after making lawmakers vote on the legislation that he ultimately vetoed. As for the lawmakers who made those controversial votes, few if any faced repercussions back home.

The compensation issue reemerged over the weekend when New York Gov. **Kathy Hochul** endorsed a bill to increase the base pay of lawmakers there from \$110,000 to \$142,000. New York lawmakers are now the highest-paid legislators in the nation.

State Rep. **Mandie Landry**, a New Orleans Democrat, took to Twitter and noted New York lawmakers make almost 10 times more than Louisiana lawmakers. "Even \$40,000 per year would be a substantial difference for us," she said. "Maybe things would look different here if all Louisiana residents had the capability to run for the Legislature."

If Louisiana lawmakers truly want to make a go of this issue in the next regular session, they could consider legislation that would allow any increase in base pay to take effect in a future term — perhaps the one that begins in 2028. That may not do much to help lawmakers who are currently serving, but it could at least help the institution keep pace with the Southern regional average.

According to a report from Senate staff during the 2008 debate, lawmakers make about \$9.35 per hour in base pay, based on nothing more but participation in legislative sessions and committee meetings. If the 2008 bill had passed, that hourly rate would have jumped to \$20.83.

For some lawmakers, it's a limited equation, since it doesn't take into account the work that transpires away from the Capitol and back home. While the state Constitution defines their positions as part time, lawmakers keep full-time schedules at their district offices.

If Jindal had not vetoed the 2008 proposal, the pay raise would have initially cost voters \$3.3 million in 2009 and \$17.8 million during the first five years of implementation. (The raise was tied to the Consumer Price Index and designed for annual adjustments.)

"I wish we could explain this to voters in quick sound bites, but it's too complicated," Landry said in her comments on New York's legislation. "I think voters would approve of a sufficient raise if we could describe the situation in detail."

While Louisiana lawmakers must suffer the indignity of having the 17th lowest legislative salary in the nation, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, they do receive other forms of compensation from the state.

In addition to \$168 per diem and mileage reimbursements, lawmakers in Louisiana are allowed several thousand dollars each for unvouchered expenses and office costs. They also receive health insurance and, in some cases, below-market rental rates for apartments.

The current \$16,800 legislative wage was established 42 years ago, back when gasoline was \$1.31 gallon. The average base salary for a lawmaker in America, meanwhile, weighed in at roughly \$39,000 last year.

Our senators and representatives certainly have strong arguments to make when it comes to legislative compensation. Voters, for their part, may be more receptive to the idea if lawmakers could similarly find ways to boost the compensation of all residents.

This is an election year, after all.

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[Our History:](#)

**[The Last Whig \(Circa 1843\)](#)**

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This month marks the 192nd anniversary (Jan. 31, 1831) of the beginning of **Gov. Andre B. Roman's** term in office — and the 180th anniversary of its end (Jan. 30, 1843).

Roman was not only the last Whig to serve as governor of Louisiana but also the first to serve non-consecutive terms.

His eight years at the helm were split by **Gov. Edwards Douglas White Sr.**, who spoiled Roman's attempt at a second consecutive term.

During Roman's time in office, hundreds of residents were killed by yellow fever, the number of banks doubled and his administration created the framework for the modern penitentiary system.

The only other governors to serve multiple non-consecutive terms were **Francis T. Nicholls, Earl Long, Jimmie Davis** and **Edwin Edwards**.

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## SOCIALLY YOURS

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### ***WEDDING BELLS***

Sen. **Katrina Jackson** and Pastor **Samuel M. Andrews** are getting married (She said yes!)... **Allyce Trapp** and **Wilson Alexander** got engaged over the holiday break as well... **Rachel DiResto** and **Michael DiResto** toasted to 28 years together over the weekend... **Cheryl Wutke Michelet** and **Kirk Michelet** celebrated 25 years last week...

### ***HAPPY BIRTHDAY, TRACKERS!***

- Tuesday, Jan. 3: Pointe Coupee Parish President **Major Thibaut** and Judge **Marcus Hunter**
- Wednesday, Jan. 4: Rep. **Larry Bagley** and **Courtney Baker**
- Thursday, Jan. 5: Rep. **Mack Cormier** and former Congressman **Chris John**



- Friday, Jan. 6: Public Service Commissioner **Foster Campbell**, former Shreveport Mayor **Ollie Tyler**, **Allyce Trapp**, **Andrew Muhl**, **Jack Lyle Richards**, **Dennie Edwards**, **Jennifer Angelle**, **Doug Foster** and **Jeremy White**
- Saturday, Jan. 7: Former Congressman **Vance McAllister**, **Jenee Slocum**, **Dayne Sherman**, **Danny McGlynn** and **Mukul Verma**
- Sunday, Jan. 8: **Kirk Williamson** and **Susan East Nelson**
- Monday, Jan. 9: Late President **Richard Nixon** (1913), **Kelli Bovard**, **Kevin Roig**, **Delia Taylor** and **Jeremy Alford**
- Have an upcoming birthday or a date I need to know about? Drop a line to [JJA@LaPolitics.com](mailto:JJA@LaPolitics.com).

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**THE END.**