



LURE & INSURE

Incentive session continues

The rubber meets the road today as members of the Appropriations Committee dive into the session's centerpiece bills.

In order to turn the tide of failing and exiting property insurance writers, Insurance Commissioner **Jim Donelon** wants lawmakers to kick over \$45 million for the Insure Louisiana Incentive Program.

Many lawmakers, however, want restrictions on the money, possibly a deadline for spending the dollars and generally more control.

The call authorized by Gov. **John Bel Edwards**, however, doesn't allow for a lot of wiggle room. But with Speaker **Clay Schexnayder**, President **Page Cortez** and the business lobby on board with the incentive session, anything is possible.

Donelon is striving to be the biggest personality in the building and has even personally lobbied lawmakers. He also released a recorded video statement yesterday [using the Twitter account of his deputy commissioner of public affairs.](#)

Democrats are digging in how they can and plan to put pressure on Donelon to make sure the fund will be used to lift up policyholders, not

just corporations. Dems want to make sure Donelon owns up to being commissioner during a consumer period the incumbent himself describes as a "crisis."

The session may stretch into the weekend, but the leadership is hoping to wrap up the Legislature's business by Friday.

SESSION COVERAGE

- The Advocate: Legislature starts debate on crafting property insurance lifelines
- AP: Louisiana Special Session to Tackle Insurance Crisis Begins
- WVUE: Legislature begins special session on Louisiana insurance crisis
- WWL: Louisiana mulling \$45 million plan to bring more insurance companies to state
- Business Report: Can Louisiana property insurance market meet demand without incentives?
- Illuminator: Lawmakers introduce legislation to address insurance crisis
- KALB: State lawmakers undecided on \$45M for insurance incentive fund
- WVLA: Lawmakers gavel in for special session to pass insurance crisis 'Band-Aid'
- The Advocate: Insurers cashed in on Louisiana's short-lived incentive program. The results were mixed.

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MOBILE SPORTS BETTING

Sovereignty, Equity & Betting on the Reservation

Mobile sports betting is an emerging anchor in Louisiana's gaming industry — to the tune of \$26.5 million for the state's coffers over the past 12 months.

Federally recognized tribes in Louisiana are empowered to conduct the same gaming activities (on their own land) as private gaming enterprises across the state. In fact, in three different regions of the state, employment opportunities at land-based casinos and revenue generated on tribal lands have led to significant economic investments and steady job creation.

For example, the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana has allocated more than \$80 million in local grants for law enforcement, infrastructure, public service and community programming since building its market-leading land-based casino at the turn of the Century. And we're not alone. No private gaming corporation can match the magnitude of the direct impact tribes have made with their own profits in their communities for the past 20 years.

When mobile betting legislation authorized private industry to take online bets in Louisiana, however, the listed entities eligible for licensure excluded federally-recognized Native American tribes. Unfortunately, this move left tribes behind and prevented them from using this critical economic tool to support tribal members and surrounding communities.

Before mobile sports betting, parity and equity in the gaming world existed for private industry and tribal governments. Today, adding insult to injury, the purposeful exclusion of tribal participation in the mobile betting marketplace undermines the financial security of some of our most prized cultural assets in Louisiana — our Native people.

Technology, as a tool, should be used to empower communities, not merely to enrich for-profit companies.

Could changes to tribe participation in mobile gaming be coming soon?

Stay tuned...

POLITICAL CHATTER

- **BELTON CHECK-IN:** According to a campaign spokesperson, District Attorney **John Belton** has \$450,000 in the bank for his attorney general bid. He has also hired fundraising consultant **Teri Hutchinson**.
 - **TENURE CHECK-IN:** Via **Piper Hutchinson** (@PiperHutchBR): "Sen. **Stewart Cathey** confirms he won't be calling his task force to study tenure, but is instead working with higher education leaders on a bill he intends to introduce in the regular session. Cathey declined to name the leader's he's working with."
 - **SWORN IN:** Sens. **Royce Duplessis** and **Caleb Kleinpeter** were officially sworn in yesterday.
 - **HONORED:** The Financial Aid Suite at ULM has been named in honor of former Rep. **Charles McDonald**, the author of the original TOPS legislation.
 - **FISH ON:** The Joint Natural Resources Committee meets Wednesday on the proposed rules for speckled trout sizes and limits.
 - **WEDNESDAY:** PSC Commissioner **Davante Lewis** has a fundraiser at Longview Wednesday at 5 p.m.
 - **SATURDAY:** Early voting begins for the Feb. 18 election in House District 93.
 - **IN ONE WEEK:** Next Tuesday will see an evening reception for Treasurer John Schroder at 5:30 p.m. at the home of **Katherine Gelderman** and **Tony Gelderman**. (2403 Camp Street)
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

*Please join us for a fundraiser
honoring*

State Representatives

Michael Echols Beau Beaulieu

Wednesday, February 1st, 2023
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

*1460 Ted Dunham Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70802*

*Suggested Contribution:
\$250-\$2500*

Make checks payable to:

Michael Echols Campaign or Echo PAC
1800 Riverside Dr
Monroe, LA 71201

Or

Friends of Beau
152 West Main St.
New Iberia, LA 70560

RSVP: Eldon at eldon@issuemanagementllc.com

Paid for by Michael Echols Campaign, Friends of Beau

Have an event you want to showcase and single out in *The Tracker's* "Mark Your Calendar" feature? Book your date now and get sponsorship rates by dropping a line to JJA@LaPolitics.com.

HEADLINES & BYLINES

- The Advocate: This year's Washington Mardi Gras thought to be most popular ever
- The Advocate: Chairs of both state political parties in Louisiana, under fire, facing calls to resign
- Business Report: Preserve Louisiana at 'reduced capacity' after losing Old Governor's Mansion space
- Daily Comet: Graves, Wilson say they both might still launch campaigns for Louisiana governor
- Reason: Louisiana Sheriffs' Offices Have Been Destroying Public Records Without Permission
- The Advocate: Former Louisiana Farm Bureau office sells for \$4.8M. Here's what's planned for the space.
- Illuminator: Another study links poverty to poor results at Louisiana schools

WHAT YOU MISSED IN LW

Here's what you missed in the latest issue of LaPolitics Weekly, published last week...

- **FLOAT NOT FULL**: "I don't know who I will support for governor," said U.S. Sen. **John Kennedy** in the lead Q&A feature from last week's special Washington Mardi Gras issue. "It's too early. The field is not set. Here's my prediction about the governor's race: The experts will be wrong."
- **JNK ON JUDICIAL NOMINEES**: "I sit on the Senate Judiciary Committee. I work with the Biden folks, like I worked with the Trump folks, to nominate good people. I won't be strong-armed. I'm looking for good, honest lawyers, and therefore judges, not ideologists."

- **LABI ON POLICY:** Just in time for the statewide election cycle, the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry is launching a policy-focused initiative meant to position the state as an economic leader in the South by 2030...
- **INSIDE THE RAILS/BROTHER 1:** Running to replace Rep. **Barry Ivey**, now a Senate candidate, will be his identical twin **Brandon Ivey**, a civil contractor. Also expected to run are EBR Metro Councilman **Aaron Moak**, **Jamie Pope** of Citizens for a New Louisiana, attorney **Lauren Ventrella** and attorney **Steve Whitlow**...
- **INSIDE THE RAILS/BROTHER 2:** Not to be outdone, Livingston Parish Councilman **Shane Mack** is expected to run to replace his brother, Rep. **Sherman Mack**. Attorney **Arron Ellis** of Walker is likewise a potential candidate. **Derek Babcock** and former educator **Robin Parrot** have been mentioned as possibilities as well...
- **HIRED:** Baker Botts announced this week that former Veterans Affairs Secretary **David LaCerte** has joined the firm as special counsel in its Houston office...
- **SWORN IN:** The oath of office was administered this week in Thibodaux to Supreme Court Chief Justice **John Weimer**. The oath marked the beginning of Justice Weimer's final 10-year term...
- **HISTORY:** From Capitoland historian **Mitch Rabalais** we learned how a Louisiana governor's pajamas caused an international incident...
- **THEY SAID IT:** "We can always spend more money." —**Eileen Carter**, organizer for the recall of New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, on what may be needed during the campaign's final weeks, in *The Advocate*

Wish you would have read these stories last week? Subscribe today to www.LaPoliticsWeekly.com.

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Our History:

Insurance Kickbacks

For this week's history feature, we dial back 43 years to when the feds launched a sophisticated corruption operation known as Bri-Lab.

We'll take a look back at that investigation courtesy of [an episode of "Louisiana: The State We're In"](#) that originally aired on Feb. 15, 1980.

The episode takes a close look at the FBI investigation, codenamed Bri-Lab, that involved an insurance kickback scheme that resulted in grand jury subpoenas for 13 Louisiana officials, including Gov. **Edwin Edwards**, Lt. Gov. **Jimmy Fitzmorris**, Lt. Gov.-elect **Bobby Freeman**, Sen. **Sonny Mouton** and Public Service Commission Chairman **Louis Lambert**.

Most notably, the investigation further implicated Commissioner of Administration **Charles Roemer** and New Orleans mobster **Carlos Marcello**.

This episode from the Louisiana Digital Media Archive also features:

- The headlines from the Bri-Lab investigation
- Statements made outside of the federal courthouse by Freeman, Lambert and his attorney **Camille Gravel**
- A press conference by U.S. Attorney **John Voltz** on the investigation
- A report on undercover FBI agents staking out the office of Marcello
- A repeat showing of a legislative investigation on alleged mismanagement of the state's group health insurance program from June 1979
- A look back at the Louisiana Scandals of 1939, which resulted in the resignation of Gov. **Richard Leche** and 250 indictments of state officials

[WATCH THE EPISODE](#)

SOCIALLY YOURS

WEDDING BELLS

This week marks the 28th wedding anniversary of **Caprice Ieyoub** and former Attorney General **Richard Ieyoub**... **Emily Romero** and Rep. **Troy Romero** will celebrate their anniversary this month, too (Feb. 12)... **Kris Kimball** and **Charlie Whinham** toasted to another year together last week...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, TRACKERS!

- Tuesday, Jan. 31: Congressman **Garret Graves, Ron J. Sapia, Jeff Roedel, Danny Heitman, Dane Strother** and **Jody Montelaro**
 - Wednesday, Feb. 1: **Sidney Cates, Ethan Melancon** and **Dirk Thibodeaux**
 - Thursday, Feb. 2: Former BESE member **Chas Roemer, Danny Wilson** and **Charmaine Caccioppi**
 - Friday, Feb. 3: Rep. **Aimee Freeman**, Jefferson Parish President **Cynthia Lee Sheng, Sam Karlin** and **Greg Bowser**
 - Saturday, Feb. 4: Former Speaker **Charlie DeWitt**, Jefferson Councilman **Ricky Templet, Ed Walters, Sarah Mulhearn, Jason Brad Berry, Miranda Restovic** and **Bill Bryan**
 - Sunday, Feb. 5: Saturday, February 5: **Sadie Becnel** and **Rachel Foreman**
 - Monday, Feb. 6: Commissioner of Administration **Jay Dardenne, Cindy Edmonds, Laura Veazey, Stephen Waguespack, Tom Fitzmorris** and **Kelle Hennessy**
 - Have an upcoming birthday or a date I need to know about? Drop a line to JJA@LaPolitics.com.
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THE END.