



WELCOME TO WEEK ONE

57 days until sine die...

"This the last session of the term," Senate President **Page Cortez** said Monday, on opening day, before adding, "We hope."

That sentiment is certainly shared across Capitoland as this regular session plods through its third day — with another 57 to go.

- **TREND WATCH:** The Legislative Branch reaching for more power at the cost of the Executive Branch has been an ongoing policy trend this term and that will continue with HB 392 by Rep. **Larry Frieman**. Ways and Means passed the bill today to weaken the Executive Branch's influence over the capital outlay process.
- **SPEAKING OF:** The administration's capital outlay budget will be submitted to lawmakers on Monday.
- **SWORN IN:** The newest member of the House is Rep. **Alonzo Knox** of New Orleans. He has been assigned to Criminal Justice, Civil Law and Retirement.
- **MONEY MATTERS:** Appropriations members dived into the teacher pay issue today. Gov. **John Bel Edwards** wants a bigger raise (maybe as high as \$3,000) than BESE is proposing (\$2,000) and

many conservatives don't like the idea at all, especially with the temporary sales tax ready to roll off of the books in 2025. Meanwhile, Senate Finance approved legislation to increase supplemental pay for municipal and parish police and firefighters by \$100 per month.

- **STUFF TO WATCH:** This is **Greg Hilburn's** "5 things to watch as Louisiana's Legislative Session begins." And this is **Tyler Bridges'** "7 key issues to follow in the legislative session."
- **SOMETHING ELSE TO WATCH FOR:** Via the Budget Project's **Jan Moller** (@jmollerLBP): "Rep. **Phillip DeVillier** regrets the 'trigger' language included in 2021 tax-swap package that could force automatic tax cuts and require the Legislature to slash critical programs. Luckily there is legislation by Rep. **C. Denise Marcelle** (HB 491) to eliminate the trigger."
- **ANOTHER SWITCH:** Rep. **Jeremy LaCombe** first considered switching to Republican before his failed attempt at a Senate seat. But he finally made it official this week on session's opening day, helping the GOP build its supermajority in the lower chamber. While many may think the party switch comes just in time for the session, it's probably timed more for qualifying and the fall ballot.
- **THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT:** More than 1,300 people downloaded the new "La Lege" app Monday. Developed by the House and Senate leadership, the app "provides a new level of technology, transparency and access to anyone interested in the lawmaking process."
- **TONIGHT:** Speaker **Clay Schexnayder** is having his steak dinner for reps and House staff at 6 p.m. in the Barracks... The LLBC reception is at 6 p.m. at the LMOGA House... Louisiana Women LEAD is hosting "Political Jeopardy" at 6:30 p.m. at the Loft...

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June 9-10, 2023

For nearly 30 years, the Coushatta Powwow has united Indian American cultures to celebrate and preserve the traditions of our ancestors and share what is best about our culture with the public. Celebrate with thousands of visitors from Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi at this two-day event. The Powwow inspires the next generation to practice and learn America's First Peoples' art, music, dance, language, and culture, bridging two worlds: the past and the future. You won't want to miss the Grand Entry, a rhythmic march that opens the competition when all dancers in full regalia claim the Dancing Ground to the accompaniment of tribal drums and singers. Lodging and other accommodations are available at the Powwow site, The Pavilion at Coushatta Casino Resort.

For more information, visit www.CoushattaPowwow.com.

POLITICAL CHATTER

- **FINANCE REPORTS COMING DUE:** The next state campaign finance deadline is Monday. A few candidates are trying to get ahead of the curve. For example, **Tim Temple**, a candidate for insurance commissioner, announced he will report more than \$2 million in the bank. There's also this story: "**Stephen Waguespack** makes cash splash in Louisiana governor's race."
- **SOS UPDATE:** Speaker **Clay Schexnayder** is running for secretary of state. Incumbent Secretary **Kyle Ardoin** is not seeking re-election. Public Service Commissioner **Mike Francis** and businessman **Brandon Troclair** are already announced. Rep. **Barry Ivey** is now thinking about the race. "It is a completely different landscape now," said Ivey.
- **NEW JOB:** **Mitch Rabalais** will be leaving his role as communications director for Congresswoman **Julia Letlow** at the end of this week and taking a position on the staff of U.S. Sen. **Katie Boyd Britt** of Alabama. Rabalais has been with the Richland Parish representative since shortly after her initial election in 2021 and previously worked for the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, the LSU System and *LaPolitics Weekly*.

- **ALSO HIRED: Mary-Alizabeth Beaulieu** is the new technical assistant for the 2nd District of the Public Service Commission.
- **MEET & GREET:** Former Congressman **John Fleming** has a meet and greet for his treasurer's campaign Friday at 8 p.m. at the BR Hilton. (More: events@hutchinsonandcompany.com)
- **VIA LHA:** "In this [video](#), **Ashley Castello** with Louisiana's Hemophilia Foundation urges state lawmakers to protect lifesaving healthcare access for her son and other patients who rely on the hemophilia treatment center at Tulane University. This important program receives most of its funding through the federal 340B prescription drug discount program. Congress created the 340 program to help non-profit, safety-net providers stretch scarce federal resources and expand services for vulnerable patients like Ashley's son."
- **REMEMBERING DON:** "**Don Briggs**, [Lafayette businessman and LOGA founder](#), dies at 82"
- **REMEMBERING RICHARD:** "**Richard Ieyoub**, [3-term Louisiana attorney general](#), dies at 78"

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

- [Insurance Journal](#): Lawsuit, Adjuster Say UPC Altered Louisiana Estimate After Hurricane Ida
- [The Advocate](#): More than a third of teachers work extra jobs, survey says: 'I've considered declaring bankruptcy'
- [The Advocate](#): When Louisiana sued them, they paid. The suits were later dropped, but they're still out of luck.

- Advertiser: Louisiana Secretary of State **Kyle Ardoin** won't seek reelection, blasts election deniers
 - WVLA: Lawmaker looks to tighten distracted driving law
 - Advertiser: The latest on Louisiana's abortion ban debate in 60 seconds
-

WHAT YOU MISSED IN LW

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

- **HERE COMES THE SESSION**: We learned in last week's first installment of this preview that busting the spending cap may be the centerpiece vote of the session. Conservative Caucus Chair **Jack McFarland** said during a Zoom forum hosted by the Public Affairs Research Council that his members don't like the idea. Senate President **Page Cortez**, meanwhile, said if the cap is busted, the money should be confined to one-time spending...
- **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**: This session looks to be a busy one for House Criminal Justice. "With re-election coming, we're seeing a lot of tough-on-crime bills and as usual there will be gun bills," said Chair **Joe Marino**, adding, "It's the same slate of real-life, emotional bills that we usually see, but during an election year." The abortion debate (over exceptions) will make a return and so will the death penalty issue. Expectations for the death penalty issue, however, are changing slightly, with district attorneys and others starting to soften on abolishing the practice. Another unique policy angle to watch for comes in the form of legislation from Rep. **Tony Bacala**, which "provides that the crime of criminal trespass does not apply to any person operating a watercraft on running waters of the state." It's a new approach to the old water access issue that has haunted the Natural Resources committees for years...
- **THE #LaGOV AGENDAS**: Attorney General **Jeff Landry** has slowly been rolling out a legislative agenda, first backing bills that crack down on library books and this week supporting legislation to expose criminal justice advocates who are "bad actors." Treasurer **John Schroder** will be around session as well and is interested in being

part of the debate over ESG (environmental, social and governance) investing. House Commerce Chair **Paul Davis** said it will be among the more engaging issues her committee hears this year. There are two sitting legislators in the field, of course, Rep. **Richard Nelson**, who will have an outsized voice on tax issues, and Sen. **Sharon Hewitt**, who is beginning to make an issue over Louisiana's low minimum wage. Former Transportation Secretary **Shawn Wilson** will have many roads and bridges to follow through the process and former LABI President **Stephen Waguespack** will surely have some interest in the priorities he was helping shape just a few weeks ago...

- **LaPOLITICS Q&A:** "Emotions are running high on (carbon sequestration) — and for good reason," House Natural Resources Chair Jean-Paul Coussan said in the most recent LaPolitics Q&A. "There are economic, technological, geological, regulatory and environmental issues all intersecting, all of which will be borne out at testimony this session. Some long committee meetings await us! We have the opportunity to establish good policy based on sound science and proven technologies to create jobs and opportunity for our citizens. Acadiana has always been the epicenter of the oil and gas service industry Louisiana. At their core, these are oil and gas projects. From landmen to machine shops, engineers to geologists, and from drilling rigs to pressure control, these CCS projects will put people in Acadiana and across Louisiana back to work using the skills and technology that the oil and gas sector has trained them to do for generations."
- **GRAVES VS. CASSIDY?:** If you chat with the folks around Congressman **Garret Graves**, you'll hear more talk about the U.S. Senate than governor. Graves, of course, recently announced he would not seek the latter and now he's refusing to rule out a run for the former in 2026. If that's the path for Graves, that sets the congressman on a collision course with the seat currently held by U.S. Sen. **Bill Cassidy**. Stay tuned...
- **HISTORY ("Storming the Sazerac"):** Sept. 26, 1949, was the opening day of the Roosevelt Hotel's Sazerac Bar, which had been created with the renovation of a wine and liquor store facing Baronne Street and renamed after the watering hole that had operated at various locations for nearly 100 years. It may have seemed to be a day like so many others in the intertwined history of New Orleans and alcoholic beverages, but there was a difference...

- **THEY SAID IT:** "I can't take credit for everything we've done in the Legislature. But I don't want any of the blame either." —Rep. **Tony Bacala**, during his first re-elect fundraiser last month

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Our History:

A #LaLEGE REUNION

In 1940, the state budget was \$100 million and lawmakers earned a per diem of \$10 each day during a session. The leadership also had to make sure there was plenty of wiggle room in their schedules, because fistfights and gun play at the Capitol were commonplace. The politicians who served in the Legislature during the first half of the 20th Century were simply another breed.

Fast forward to 1981, when lawmakers hosted a massive reunion for any living person who had served in the Louisiana Legislature. The reunion took the form of a mock session and the more than 200 former lawmakers in attendance heard speeches from then-former Govs. **Jimmie Davis**, **Bob Kennon** and **Edwin Edwards**.

The folks over at the State Archives dug up some news coverage of that reunion session, which began with a motion by former Sen. **Claude Duval** of Houma that the session have no rules. The motion passed, and the floor speeches commenced.

"Back in 1940, we didn't have any television," said one unidentified old-timer. "I think we had one radio station down there. That's why nobody knew how great we were."

At the conclusion of the mock session, former Rep. **Cleveland Fruge** of Mamou made the motion to sine die, and the significance of that was not missed by the older legislators in attendance. When he was a lawmaker, Fruge was responsible for making the motion to sine die during the impeachment of former Gov. **Huey P. Long**.

Unlike his 1981 motion, the sine die suggestion didn't immediately take hold during the impeachment proceedings. "Hell broke loose," Fruge recalled before the mock session was brought to a close.

WATCH THE VIDEO

SOCIALLY YOURS

WEDDING BELLS

Joanna Leopold and former Rep. **Chris Leopold** are toasting to another year together..

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, TRACKERS!

- Tuesday, April 11: Former District Attorney **Keith Stutes, Roy Fletcher, Ed Chervenak, Skip Breeden, Kim Carver** and **Scott Madere**
- Wednesday, April 12: Sen. **Heather Cloud**, Rep. **Vincent Pierre, Marty Chabert**, former Mayor **Kip Holden, Ryan Cross** and **Jack Pandol Jr.**
- Thursday, April 13: HGA Chair **John Stefanski, Errin Flynn Viguerie, June Peay** and **Ryan Cross**
- Friday, April 14: **Jennifer Alford LeJeune** and **Justin DiCharia**
- Saturday, April 15: Rep. **Joseph Orgeron**, former Rep. **Dalton Honore, Joseph Untz, Kevin Rispone** and **Brady Flavin**
- Sunday, April 16: **Jesse McCormick, Anthony Ramirez, Bradley Beychok, Susanne Johnson Inman, John Dupont** and **Joshua Paul Melder**

- Monday, April 17: **Shelly Dupre** and **Tara Zachary Laver**
- 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.