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THE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT SEPARATION OF POWERS



EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Governor Lieutenant Governor Secretary of State Attorney General Treasurer

Commissioner of Agriculture Commissioner of Insurance

Other Elected and Appointed Heads of State Boards and Departments

RESPONSIBILITIES

Governor's Duties

- Oversee Functions of State Government
- Propose State Budget
- Suggest Changes to Laws
- Sign Into Law or Veto Bills passed by the Legislature
- Appoint Members of Boards and Commissions

Others' Duties

 Administer the Offices and Agencies for which they are Responsible



LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Senate House of Representatives



JUDICIAL BRANCH

State Supreme Court
5 State Courts of Appeal
43 District Courts
5 Family or Juvenile Courts
48 City Courts
3 Parish Courts

RESPONSIBILITIES

Legislative Duties

- Represent their Constituents
- Propose and Vote on State Laws
- Finalize and Maintain a Balanced State Budget
- Increase or Reduce State
 Taxes
- Oversee Functions of State Agencies
- Propose Changes in State Constitution
- Consider Overriding Vetoes

RESPONSIBILITIES

Supreme Court Duties

- Interpret Civil and Criminal State Laws and the Constitution
- Review Decisions Issued by Lower Courts

Appellate Court Duties

 Review Appeals of Cases Heard in District Courts

District Court Duties

 Try Civil and Criminal Cases Stemming from Offenses in Communities

Family & Juvenile Court Duties

 Hear only Cases for which they are Responsible

City & Parish Court Duties

Deal with Lesser Crimes

The Louisiana Legislature

Louisiana's state government looks a lot like our federal government. We have three branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. The Legislative Branch makes laws for the state, the Executive Branch enforces the laws passed by the State Legislature, and the Judicial Branch makes sure these laws don't violate either our state or federal constitutions. We are going to focus on the Legislative Branch.

There are two groups of people that make up Louisiana's Legislature. One is the House of Representatives, the other is the Senate. Since we have two houses, our Legislature is called "bicameral". In the Latin language, "bi" means two, and "cameral" means house. There are 105 state representatives and 39 state senators. They are elected to represent us every four years, called a term.

Every year, the Legislature meets in Baton Rouge, our state capital, to participate in legislative sessions. A session is when Legislators get together to debate each other's ideas. The Legislators put their ideas into documents, called bills. If a bill gets the okay from both Houses it becomes a law.

In even-numbered years we have a Regular Session in which all kinds of bills are introduced. In odd-numbered years we have Fiscal Sessions in which bills dealing with money matters may be introduced. Each member may prefile (before session begins) not more than 5 bills that are not about money matters. Each member may also prefile an unlimited number of local or special bills (bills that do not affect the entire state) and 5 more fiscal or local bills once session begins.

We can also have Special Sessions. If the Legislature is not in session, and something happens that needs to be discussed by both Houses, the Governor or the Legislature itself can call a Special Session.



The Governor's Mansion



The first Governor's mansion was built before the Civil War, but because of the persistence of Gov. Huey Long it was replaced in 1930. Governor Long wanted a new mansion to live in that was white, so he asked the Louisiana Legislature to give him the money to fund his project. The Legislature refused so Long brought Louisiana prisoners to the old mansion and had them tear it down! The Legislature then had to give him the money to build a new one.

In 1960, there was a push to replace the Long Mansion with one that reflected Louisiana's rich architectural heritage. So, using the Oak Alley antebellum home as a model, a new Governor's Mansion was built. Completed in 1963, the current mansion overlooks the Capitol Lake in Baton Rouge.

At 25,000 square feet, the mansion has 3 floors, a basement, 8 bedrooms, and 16 baths – 60 rooms in all! In the center of the stair hall floor is the state seal made by artists using 2,500 pieces of inlaid stone. They added a Louisiana touch to the seal, a Magnolia blossom. This flower has special meaning in our state, do you know what it is? If you keep reading, you'll find out!

Louisiana State Capitol



The dream of Governor Huey P. Long, the "new" State Capitol is now a symbol of pride and history for Louisiana. Completed in 1932, it only took 14 months to build. The building itself stands on a 27-acre lot and cost a mere five million dollars to build.

If you get the chance to visit Baton Rouge, this magnificent building is a must see. The tallest capitol in the United States at 450 feet and 34 floors, the front staircase is engraved with the names of the 50 U.S. states in the order they were admitted into the Union.

The inside is just as beautiful, decorated with marble, bronze, murals, and sculptures. To get into both the Senate and House chambers you have to pass through beautiful bronze doors that literally weigh a ton each!

Ironically, Huey Long was assassinated in the Capitol in 1935, just three years after its completion. He is buried on the grounds of the building, and there is a statue of his likeness that faces the front of the Capitol.

Group tours are offered by appointment, and are available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m approximately.

House of Representatives





The state is divided by population into 105 areas, called districts. Before someone can go to Baton Rouge as a Representative, he or she has to be elected by the voters living in one of these districts to represent them in the Legislature.

Do you think you'd like to be a state Representative one day? Well, there are a few requirements you'll have to meet before you can try. First, you have to be at least 18 years old and a registered voter. That makes sense because you have to be 18 before you can register to vote anyway! Next, you have to have lived in Louisiana for at least two years. You also have to live in the district you want to represent. Anyone interested?

During each session there are hundreds of bills Representatives have to consider making into laws. It would take forever if they heard every one! Fortunately for them, the House is split up into committees that hear bills first. For example, if a bill is about putting computers into every classroom in our state, the Education Committee reviews it. If they like the bill, they'll send it to the entire House to hear. If they don't like it, they can amend it or never take a vote. This is how most of the bills are "killed".

A bill can go through lots of changes if it's lucky enough to become a law. On average, only a small percentage of bills introduced make it through the whole process and become laws!

Senate

There are 39 Louisiana State Senators. Each Senator represents a district, a particular area of the state, and is elected by voters in that district. Frequently, Senators are identified by the district they represent. If you read or hear about a Senator representing District 3 or District 35, or any of the 39 districts, you can easily find out which part of the state that Senator represents by finding the district on a Senate District map like the one you see here. For instance, the District 3 Senator represents a portion of New Orleans, while the District 35 Senator represents an area in North Louisiana.

To be elected a Louisiana State Senator, you must meet the same requirements necessary to be elected to the House of Representatives. As a Senator you will represent more people than a Representative. Each Senator represents about 108,000 people, and each Representative represents about 40.000.

Another difference between the Senate and the House of Representatives is the special authority and responsibility of the Senate to confirm the appointment of persons to important state jobs. Senators review the qualifications and background of each person and in a public vote decide whether or not to approve -confirm- a person to the job.





As in the House, the members of the Senate are assigned to various committees to discuss the hundreds of bills considered during each session. Each committee debates bills on certain subjects. For instance, the Finance Committee discusses the state budget bill, while the Transportation and Highways Committee discusses the speed limit bill. A majority of committee members must agree to let the full Senate consider the measure. No bill can become law unless both the House and the Senate approve it.



THE ROLE OF A LEGISLATOR

A LEGISLATOR'S JOB

The job of a state legislator is to consider, debate and vote on laws. It is the legislature's responsibility to establish general statewide policy, levy taxes, appropriate and otherwise decide how state monies are spent, and establish and review the activities of all governmental agencies and officials.

In addition, they are called upon by you, their constituents, to assist in a variety of ways, including: obtaining aid from public agencies; providing information about state programs; current law and pending legislation; providing assistance at the state capitol; securing projects and programs for House & Senate districts and aiding in solving problems both governmental and personal, including acting as a mediator with a state agency on behalf of a constituent or local governing authority. It is their responsibility to serve.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

In Louisiana, as in Congress and most other states, the lawmaking process involves four major stages: introduction, committee action, floor action, and enrollment. In a bicameral legislature like Louisiana's, with both a house and a senate, the first three stages must occur in each of the chambers consecutively. After the chamber in which the bill is introduced completes action on the measure, the bill is sent to the other chamber, where the process is repeated through the three stages. The fourth stage, enrollment, occurs in the originating chamber after both have agreed on the final form of the proposal.

CONNECT WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

If you have any comments or questions on pending legislation, please contact the office of your state legislator. Some of the best pieces of legislation come from constituents, so if you have an idea for a bill you are encouraged to contact their office. Visit www.legis.la.gov for more information.

Name Louisiana's Elected Officials

My Statewide Elected Officials:				
Governor:				
Lieutenant Covernor:				
Secretary of State:				
Attorney General:				
State Treasurer:				
Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner:				
Insurance Commissioner:				
My Local Elected Officials				
State Representative:				
State Senator:				
Louisiana Supreme Court Justice:				
Mayor:				
School Board Member:				
City/Parish Council Member:				

Louisiana History

In 1803, with the U.S. only 27 years old, U.S. President Thomas Jefferson felt it was in his new country's best interest to gain control of New Orleans because of its port. President Jefferson sent diplomats to France to ask Napoleon if he would sell the city. Napoleon decided to sell the entire Louisiana territory for just \$15 million. The Louisiana Purchase nearly doubled the size of the United States! Thirteen of our present states came from this territory. In just 41 years the people living in the Louisiana territory belonged to three different countries!

After the Louisiana territory split into smaller pieces, what we now know as Louisiana officially became a state in 1812. It was the 18th state admitted into the Union.

The cultural diversity found in our state is a result of its unique history. Our French heritage is evident in the dialect spoken by many Louisiana natives, our parish system (all other states have counties/boroughs), and our system of law (we have the Napoleonic code law system while other states have common law). If you take a stroll in New Orleans' French Quarter you'll see some beautiful examples of Spanish architecture!

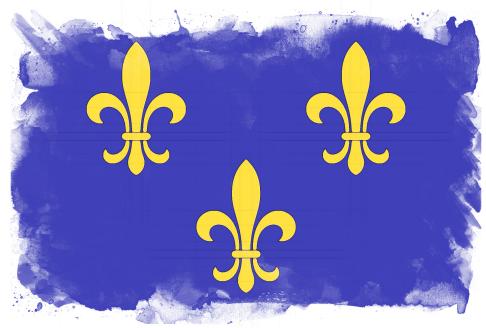




Bourbon Spain (1769)



Louisiana History



French Fleur-de-Lis (1682)

Do you know who the first inhabitants of Louisiana were? They weren't French, Spanish, English, or American. They were the Native Americans! The earliest known tribes in what is now our state date back to about 3,000 years ago. That was even before the Roman Empire developed! There were over 20 tribes of Indians located in Louisiana.

The first European explorers to our state were Spanish, but since they didn't find any gold or silver they lost interest and left. The French were the first ones to try to settle the rugged lands of Louisiana. French explorer La Salle came down the Mississippi from Canada in 1682 and named the new territory he found Louisiana in honor of France's King Louis XIV.

This new territory changed hands in 1762 because France lost the French and Indian War. The Treaty of Fountainebleau gave Spain control of Louisiana. Nobody told the French settlers living there until 1764! The Spanish didn't have control for very long. In 1800, another treaty gave control of Louisiana back to France.

State Songs

Give Me Louisiana

- -Arrangement by John Schaum
- -Words and Music by Doralice Fontane

(1st Verse)
Give me Louisiana.
The State where I was born
The State of snowy cotton.
The best I've ever known;

A State of sweet magnolias,

And creole melodies

Oh give me Louisiana.

The State where I was born

Of what sweet memories

The mossy old oaks bring.

It brings us the story of our Evangeline

A State of old tradition,

Makes good old Louisiana

The sweetest of all States.

You Are My Sunshine

-Words and Music by Jimmy H. Davis and Charles Mitchell

(4th verse)

Louisiana my Louisiana
The place where I was born.
White fields of cotton
Green fields of clover,
The best fishing and long tall corn;

Chorus:

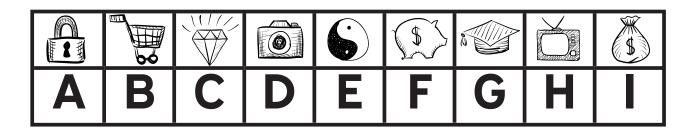
You are my sunshine
My only sunshine
You make me happy
When skies are grey
You'll never know dear
How much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away.

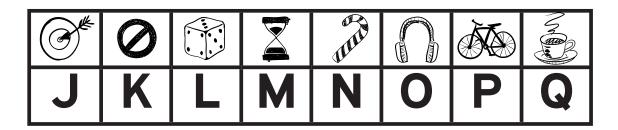
(5th verse)

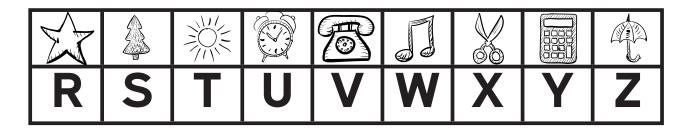
Crawfish gumbo and jambalaya
The biggest shrimp and sugar cane,
The finest oysters
And sweet strawberries
From Toledo Bend to New Orleans;
(Chorus)



Can You Decode Our State Motto?













Louisiana Legislative Terms Word Scramble

1. LBLI	
2. WLSA	
3. TOVE	
4. CMEOTADR	
5. SKAEERP	
6. TCIAOPL	
7. BCIANURPEL	
8. SSAEDP	
9. RSINDPEET	
10.MTMTECIEO	
11.ISOSESN	
12.AENSET	
13. OLUSNAIAI	
14. ADEMENMTN	
15.RNAMHIAC	
16.AETURLGSIEL	
17. EUHSO	

Louisiana Legislative Word Search

From the list below, find and circle the words that are commonly heard in the Louisiana State Legislature. They can be read forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally.

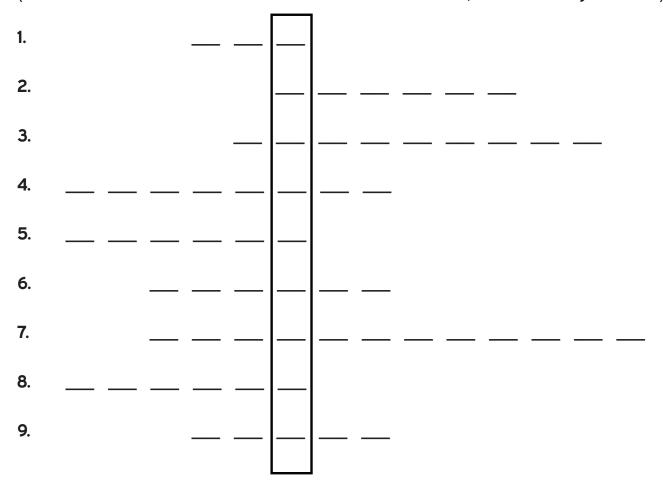
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Amend	Committee	Laws	Representative
Baton Rouge	Constituent	Legislature	Republican
Bills	Democrat	Louisiana	Senator
Capital	Election	Passed	Session
Capitol	House	President	Speaker
Chairman	Independent	Public	Veto
Chamber			Vote

Louisiana Products

Fill in the blanks with the word that fits the blank spaces and answers the clues listed at the bottom of the page. The blocked letters, read vertically, spell out the answer to the 10th clue.

(HINT: If the word does not fit the amount of blanks for that clue, it is NOT the right answer!)



Clues:

- 1. Made from petroleum
- 2. It's slimy, has 2 shells, and can be eaten raw or cooked
- 3. Louisiana is one of the U.S.'s largest producers of this "sweet" crop
- 4. In the spring we have "boils" and eat these red crustaceans with family and friends
- 5. After falling off the tree, these nuts are used to make Louisiana pralines
- 6. This shellfish can also be boiled, but its pinkish white "meat" sure tastes good fried
- 7. These red berries are the main attraction at a Pontchatoula festival
- 8. Your clothes can be made out of this product's fluffy, white fibers
- 9. A big deal in Ruston, Louisiana, the skin of this fruit can sometimes be "furry"
- 10. The 18th state admitted into the U.S.



CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO COMMITTEE MEETINGS LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

GETTING HERE:

- Directions and a map to the Capitol are on our website <u>www.house.louisiana.gov</u> under "Citizens Guide."
- You may park in areas without a reserved sign or orange cone

ENTERING THE CAPITOL:

- Enter the Capitol through the side doors (ground level below the main steps) and proceed though security.
- Please limit items that may set off a metal detector/x-ray machine or call for a
 detailed bag search (such as extra jewelery and large bags). This will delay your
 entry into the Capitol.
- No weapons of any kind are allowed inside the Capitol building.

ATTENDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

- House committee meetings are held in Committee Rooms 1-6.
- Rooms 1 & 2 are located in the ground floor in Bigby Hall
- Rooms 3-6 are located in Alario Hall down a set of steps at the end of Bigby Hall.
 An elevator is available.
- Senate Committee Rooms A-B,C,E, and F are located on the ground floor in Duval Hall. Access to the John Hainkel Committee Room is down a set of steps at the end of Duval Hall. An elevator is available.
- You may not approach the desk to speak to committee members.
- Please place ALL cell phones and other electronic devices on vibrate mode. You
 may take phone calls in the hallway only, not in committee rooms.
- Food and drinks are prohibited in committee hallways and committee rooms.

FOR YOUR COMFORT

Restrooms and vending machines are available near the committee room hallways
in the foyer of the ground floor. Water fountains are available near the restrooms,
as well as in Bigby Hall and in Duval Hall. Restrooms and water fountains are also
available in Alario Hall.

Your Legislators want to know your thoughts. Make sure they do.

The committee hearing is an opportunity to inform legislators of your position regarding pending legislation or just to observe the legislative process. However, the length of the meeting agenda and the number of people who wish to testify may require the imposition of time limitations. If you are with a group, it is advisable to appoint a spokesperson.

To register support or opposition...

You do not have to speak in committee to register your support or opposition to a bill. Please use the witness cards to indicate your position and whether you would like to testify. Green cards indicate support, red cards opposition, and white cards if you wish to provide unbiased information.

Green cards are used to support an item





Red cards are used to oppose an item



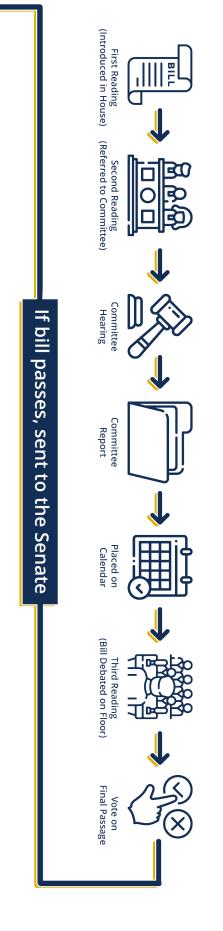


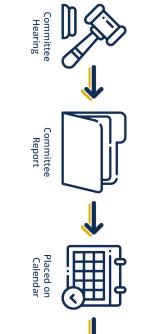
These witness cards are available in the committee room and overflow rooms on the witness tables. Carefully read, fill out, and sign the back of the witness card. Your signature is an oath that you will tell the truth. **If you wish to speak, please check the appropriate box on the card.** Please return completed cards to the designated staff member or sergeant-at-arms.

Important Note: You must fill out a separate card for each bill you are supporting or opposing.

Your oral and written comments and positions stated on the cards are important and become part of the permanent public record. Thank you for your opinion.

HOW A BIL **BECOMES A LAW**





(Bill Debated on Floor)

Vote on Final Passage

Third Reading

If bill passes, sent back to the House

(Introduced in Senate) (Referred to Committee)

Second Reading

First Reading



Bill Sent to Governor

Signed by Governor
 Vetoed by Governor but Overriden
 Not Signed by Governor by Constitutional Deadline

Bill Becomes Law if:



TAP INTO THE LEGISLATURE







Answer Key

Answer Key

BILL 1. LBLI L A W S 2. WLSA V O T E 3. TOVE DEMOCRAT 4. CMEOTADR S P E A K E R 5. SKAEERP C A P I T O L 6. TCIAOPL 7. BCIANURPEL R E P U B L I C A N PASSED 8. SSAEDP 9. RSINDPEET PRESIDENT 10.MTMTECIEO C O M M I T T E E S E S S I O N 11. ISOSESN S E N A T E 12.AENSET LOUISIANA 13. OLUSNAIAI 14. ADEMENMTN A M E N D M E N T 15. RNAMHIAC C H A I R M A N 16. AETURLGSIEL L E G I S L A T U R E HOUSE **17. EUHSO**