

From the Desk of Jason El Koubi

WHERE WE LANDED AFTER 2017 REGULAR LEGISLATIVE SESSION

While much of the 2017 Regular Session was characterized by partisanship and division, hindering progress on key issues like fiscal reform and infrastructure investment, there are some important outcomes to be recognized, such as criminal justice reform and strengthening transparency and accountability for transportation funding. We want to share a high-level recap on each of 1A's 2017 Legislative Priorities.

1) Fiscal Reform

To address the state's structural budget imbalance and a looming fiscal cliff in 2018, the Legislature took up recommendations developed over the past year by experts on the Task Force on Structural Changes in Budget and Tax Policy. Unfortunately, most of the recommendations failed to gain traction, meaning the Legislature will likely have to return to a Special Session before certain temporary taxes are set to expire in July 2018, in addition to the Special Session to solve the FY 17-18 budget.



As part of our advocacy on fiscal reform, 1A strongly opposed tax measures that unfairly targeted the business community and would have harmed Louisiana's economic competitiveness. A couple of harmful bills 1A opposed were HB628 (Jones), which proposed a Commercial Activities Tax (CAT), and HB648 (Havard), which proposed the "Louisiana Corporate Flat Tax." Both were defeated in the House Ways & Means Committee.

2) Transportation Infrastructure

As a top priority for the Session, 1A advocated for increasing Louisiana's investment in transportation infrastructure. Working in partnership with the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, 1A helped build a statewide business-led coalition known as BUILD IT: Businesses United for Improving Louisiana's Development by Investing in Transportation.



BUILD IT's major push was for HB632 by Rep. Steve Carter, which proposed a 17-cent increase in the state

gas tax to address Louisiana's critical transportation infrastructure needs. Failing to reach the 70 votes needed to pass on the House floor, the bill was withdrawn.

Importantly, the coalition was successful at advancing measures that strengthen transparency and accountability for transportation funding and project delivery. 1A was involved in the drafting of one of these bills, HB598 by Rep. Neil Abramson.

3) Workforce Development

Earlier this year, 1A released a Regional Workforce Development Strategy (RWDS), partnering with workforce development stakeholders across the region on initiatives that strengthen our workforce pipeline. 1A tracked several bills this session in line with RWDS goals. Two of the successful bills 1A supported were SB102 by Sen. Ronnie Johns and HB584 by Rep. Walt Leger. These measures provide funding mechanisms for high-demand workforce training programs and for early childhood education.



4) Public Education

As in past sessions, 1A continues to advocate for protecting and advancing the significant gains Louisiana has made in student achievement over the past decade. These gains are supported by reforms that are raising standards, providing accountability, and offering parental choice. Certain measures introduced this session would have taken Louisiana backward relative to these reforms and risked reversing our progress. Fortunately, the most harmful bills did not advance.



5) Criminal Justice Reform

Perhaps the biggest accomplishment of the 2017 Regular Session was criminal justice reform. A bipartisan package of 10 bills, developed through the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force, passed both chambers. The overhaul is projected to reduce the



state's prison population by 10 percent over the next decade, saving the state approximately \$262 million. Most of the savings will be reinvested in rehabilitation and reentry programs which will improve public safety. 1A joined with a broad, diverse coalition of organizations to support improving public safety, workforce, and the state's fiscal health.

6) Economic Development

Over the past decade, Louisiana secured unprecedented levels of private investment partly due to a system of economic development incentives. 1A supports protecting and strengthening economic development programs with demonstrated return on public investment. To that end, 1A supported two key bills to protect and strengthen the Angel Investor Tax Credit and the Research and Development (R&D) Tax Credit. These bills, HB454 (Abramson) and HB300 (Davis), passed unanimously.



1A would like to thank all of those who helped support our priorities, including our partner organizations throughout the state. We would also like to thank 1A investors Haynie & Associates and The Picard Group for helping to represent Acadiana's business community at the Capitol. Most of all, we would like to thank 1A's legislative delegation for their service and leadership on behalf of Acadiana.

Learn more at OneAcadiana.org/2017-recap.

Focused on Forward,

Jason El Koubi



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RIBBON CUTTINGS AND RECENT EVENTS



**Guidry Industrial Supplies and Services
Wednesday, May 10, 2017**



**On May 15, 1A Brought Leaders Together for
Acadiana Day at the Capitol**



**Members of Acadiana's Legislative Delegation
Addressed Business Leaders**



**Governor John Bel Edwards Proclaimed May 15
Acadiana Day**



**Leaders, Advocates, and Legislators United for
Acadiana's Priorities**



See more at OneAcadiana.org/Acadiana-Day-2017



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ON
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Advocating for Acadiana's
Top Priorities

Learn more at
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