

# 2024 Regular Legislative Session Recap

## 1A CELEBRATES WINS DURING 2024 REGULAR SESSION

The 2024 Regular Session adjourned Sine Die on June 3, with a less hectic air than usual, as legislators had already agreed on most of the state budget bills, a common cause of last-minute session stress, the day prior. During the session, 1A tracked more than 250 measures related to our **2024 Legislative Priorities**:

- Economic Competitiveness
- Talent Development
- Infrastructure Investment

Read on for a breakdown of outcomes on these priorities during the 2024 Regular Session.

View 1A's 2024 Legislative Priorities at [OneAcadiana.org/2024Priorities](https://OneAcadiana.org/2024Priorities)

View 1A's Final Bill Tracker at [OneAcadiana.org/Bill-Tracker](https://OneAcadiana.org/Bill-Tracker)

## BUT FIRST, THE BUDGET

As always, many session priorities hinged on the annual state budget. House legislators sent their version of the spending plan to the Senate in late April. Shortly thereafter, the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) projected a \$197 million increase in state general funds in the current budget year and an \$89 million increase for next year, meaning Senate lawmakers were able to fund additional projects before sending the bills back to the House for consideration.

House lawmakers ultimately agreed on the Senate proposals for next year's spending and additional allocations in the current budget year, approving nearly every budget bill a full day prior to Sine Die, except the measure funding judiciary expenses, which was approved on the final day of session after Representatives and Senators ironed out their disagreements in Conference Committee. In total, the budget bills represent a **\$49 billion** spending agreement.

Additionally, lawmakers diverted **\$717 million** in funds, which would normally be deposited into the Revenue Stabilization Fund, to one-time needs, including road and bridge projects, criminal justice infrastructure, deferred maintenance on college campuses, and water and sewer upgrades.

The state operating budget and other supplemental funding bills now await action by the Governor, who has authority to line-item veto funding provided in the bills.

Review the primary state budget bill, HB 1, [HERE](#).



➤ **Property Insurance Reform** – A package of bills led by Insurance Commissioner Tim Temple to improve Louisiana’s property insurance market was enacted by Governor Landry. These 1A-supported measures are:

- **SB 323 by Sen. Talbot** – promotes good faith and fair dealing in the claims process by providing clear rights and timelines for both the insured and the insurer, encouraging swift claims resolutions and discouraging unnecessary litigation (Became **Act 3**)
- **HB 120 by Rep. Willard** – removes the sunset date for the Louisiana Fortify Homes Program, which authorizes grants of up to \$10,000 to homeowners to retrofit roofs to better withstand weather events (Became **Act 8**)
- **HB 611 by Rep. Firmont** – removes Louisiana’s three-year rule for new policies – the only of its kind – putting Louisiana in line with every other state in the U.S. in allowing insurers to more effectively manage their risk (Became **Act 9**)
- **SB 295 by Sen. Cloud** – increases speed-to-market for insurance products by shifting Louisiana’s ratemaking system from a “prior approval” process to a “file and use” system, allowing insurers more flexibility to price their product (Became **Act 10**)

Commissioner Temple stated that “Louisiana families and businesses have been suffering from skyrocketing property insurance costs since 2020. Change does not come overnight, but the signing of these bills is a major step toward reforming Louisiana’s insurance market.”

Read more from Commissioner Temple [HERE](#).

1A thanks **Governor Jeff Landry, Commissioner Temple, Rep. Willard, Rep. Firmont, Sen. Cloud, and Sen. Talbot** for their leadership on property insurance reform.

➤ **Legal Reform** – Several bills seeking to address another issue driving up insurance costs in the state – lawsuit abuse – were considered this session, some making more headway than others.

1A supported the following legal reform measures:

- **HB 337 by Rep. McFarland** prevents **direct action** against insurers, except under limited circumstances, aligning Louisiana with 47 other states by requiring that lawsuits be brought against the insured, rather than the insurer, limiting the likelihood of inflated judgements against insurance companies (Became **Act 275**)
- **HB 423 by Rep. Melerine** revises Louisiana’s **collateral source** rule by allowing both amounts billed for medical expenses and amounts paid to be admissible as evidence, and allows courts to award up to an additional 30% of the difference between what was billed and what was paid to account for costs such as co-pays and deductibles where insurance is used, helping to curb excessive damage awards (Sent to Governor)
- **SB 355 by Sen. Stine** makes **third-party litigation funding** agreements discoverable (Sent to Governor)



Other business-backed tort reform measures stalled, either in committee or never having received an initial committee hearing, including legislation attempting to address the Housley Presumption ([HB 24](#) and [SB 20](#)) and establish reversionary trusts ([HB 597](#) and [SB 266](#)).

1A thanks **Rep. McFarland, Rep. Melerine, Sen. Stine**, and other legislators who authored key legal reform measures for championing fairness and transparency in our legal system.

1A also thanks **Commissioner Temple** and the **Louisiana Association of Business and Industry** for their tireless work to address issues affecting the insurance market in our state.

- **Louisiana Economic Development (LED)** – Senate Commerce Chair Sen. Beth Mizell authored 1A-supported legislation, [SB 494](#), to implement a reorganization of Louisiana Economic Development (LED) that strengthens the department as a business-first, best-in-class economic development agency.

The bill modernizes LED's organizational structure and operations and removes burdensome regulations constraining the department's ability to function proactively and keep pace with the business sector. SB 494 has been sent to the Governor for executive approval.

Key provisions:

- Creates the **Louisiana Economic Development Partnership (LEDP)**, a 12-member board of highly qualified private-sector leaders representing a cross-section of Louisiana's key industries:
  - **9** gubernatorial appointments
  - **1** appointment by the Speaker of the House
  - **1** appointment by the President of the Senate
  - **LED Secretary**, as a non-voting member
- Requires LED to develop a long-range economic development plan and a comprehensive strategic plan with the advice and consultation of the LEDP
- Redesigns membership of the Louisiana Economic Development Corporation board to add more economic development and business oversight
- Requires a plan to seek federal, private, and other grants supporting economic growth

1A thanks **Governor Jeff Landry, LED Secretary Susan Bonnett Bourgeois**, and **Senate Commerce Chair Beth Mizell** for their leadership in strengthening LED.

1A also thanks **Adam Knapp**, CEO of the Committee of 100, and **Mandi Mitchell**, President & CEO of Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA), for their leadership on this legislation.



➤ **M.J. Foster Promise Program** – Two 1A-supported measures extending the reach of the M.J. Foster Promise Program, which provides state financial aid to earn credentials that align with high-wage, high-demand jobs in industries like healthcare, information technology, and manufacturing, were widely supported this session:

- **Funding** – **SB 272** by **Senate Education Chair Rick Edmonds** increases the annual funding cap for the program from \$10.5 million to \$40 million, providing increased capacity to serve Louisianans seeking training to enter the workforce. Funding will remain subject to appropriation by the Legislature each year under the increased cap (Became **Act 102**)
- **Access** – **HB 728** by **Rep. Paula Davis** lowers the age of eligibility from 21 to 17, to be phased in over four award years, allowing more Louisianans to access the program (Sent to Governor)

1A thanks **Sen. Edmonds** and **Rep. Davis** for maximizing the M.J. Foster Promise Program's potential to serve Louisianans seeking to enter the workforce.

➤ **Computer Science Education** – Computing jobs are among the highest-wage and highest-demand careers nationally. Unfortunately, we currently lag behind our southern neighbors with **only 35% of Louisiana high schools offering foundational computer science courses**, compared to 78% in Mississippi, 95% in Alabama, and 99% in Arkansas ([code.org](https://code.org)).

**HB 264** by **Rep. Jason Hughes**, entitled the “**Computer Science Education Advancement Act of 2024**,” makes computer science a high school graduation requirement, as well as a qualification requirement for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS). The bill further requires the Louisiana Department of Education to publish a plan to ensure a sufficient number of qualified computer science teachers and for teacher preparation programs to include instruction on teaching computer science. (Became **Act 211**)

1A thanks **Rep. Hughes** for acting to better prepare Louisiana's students for the high-wage, high-demand careers of the future.

➤ **Literacy and Numeracy** – Two 1A-supported bills seeking to boost reading and math competency among Louisiana's students boasted widespread support this session. These measures build on the success of the Steve Carter Literacy Tutoring Program and place a renewed focus on numeracy skills:

- **HB 244** by **Rep. Jason Hughes** – renames the Steve Carter Literacy Tutoring Program to the “Steve Carter Education Program,” and expands program services to include math tutoring. The bill also extends availability of the program, originally only open to students in grades K-5, to students through grade 12, and increases the per-student funding available from \$1,000 to \$1,500 (Sent to Governor)
- **HB 267** by **Rep. Kim Carver** – requires the Louisiana Department of Education (DOE) to develop or select and provide screeners to measure the foundational numeracy of K-3 public school students. Public schools would administer DOE's screeners three times during the school year and provide interventions and support to students identified as having numeracy skills below grade level (Sent to Governor)

1A thanks **Rep. Hughes** and **Rep. Carver** for leading the way to better set Louisiana's youth up for success in education.



- **Education Savings Accounts** – **SB 313** by **Senate Education Chair Rick Edmonds** creates the Louisiana Giving All True Opportunity to Rise (LA GATOR) Scholarship Program, an education savings account (ESA) program for K-12 students that will function through state-supervised savings accounts allowing parents to direct state per-pupil funding to a variety of educational services, including private school or career or technical school tuition, online programs, instructional materials and more.

SB 313 authorizes the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to develop the LA GATOR program, subject to appropriation, and requires BESE to make recommendations on transitioning students using vouchers to the new ESA program. Amendments were made in the process to more closely align the bill to its companion in the House, **HB 745** by **Rep. Julie Emerson**, before SB 313 was approved by the Legislature and sent to the Governor's desk.

- **Occupational Licensing** – Another 1A priority this session was reducing barriers to employment caused by Louisiana's burdensome occupational licensing system. **SB 60** by **Sen. Thomas Pressly** and **HB 716** by **Rep. Charles Owen** provide for universal recognition of occupational licenses for individuals moving into our state from elsewhere in the country. Both entitled the "**Welcome Home Act**," these bills provide for a recognition process that would grant an occupational license or certification to an individual moving to Louisiana if certain criteria are met, including that the individual is in good standing with the state they're coming from.

The Institute for Justice reports that nearly one in five Americans are affected by occupational licensing and 20 states have enacted versions of universal recognition, including neighboring Mississippi. 1A supported SB 60 and HB 716 to reduce barriers to employment, making it easier for professionals to relocate to Louisiana or for those who have left to come back home. HB 716 was sent to the Governor and SB 60 became **Act 253**.

1A thanks **Sen. Pressly** and **Rep. Charles Owen** for their leadership in removing barriers to employment in Louisiana.

- **Workforce Readiness** – **SB 293** by **Sen. Edmonds**, seeks to address Louisiana's critical talent shortage by strategically aligning state workforce development programs and funding under a single point of contact, the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC). LWC Secretary Susana Schowen is a proven leader on business workforce solutions, and this legislation will ensure Louisiana's workforce strategies are best positioned to foster economic success for our citizens and industries. (Became **Act 330**)

1A thanks **Sen. Edmonds** for recognizing and breaking down barriers to workforce solutions in Louisiana.

- **Healthcare Workforce** – **HB 329** by **Rep. Brach Myers** pertains to the state's Health Care Employment Reinvestment Opportunity (HERO) Fund, which focuses on meeting the demand for nursing and allied health professionals in Louisiana. HB 329 creates a public-private partnership within the HERO Fund, boosting the program's capacity to address critical healthcare workforce needs, and updates the programs able to be funded to include support for dual enrollment and pathway programs, strategies for healthcare organizations to increase career pathways and apprenticeships, and initiatives that raise awareness of a variety of healthcare occupations and reduce barriers to accessing related education programs. HB 329 passed the Legislature with unanimous support and was sent to the Governor's desk.

1A thanks **Rep. Myers** for leading innovative solutions to address Louisiana's healthcare workforce needs.



➤ **Capital Outlay** – Another essential budget measure was [HB 2](#) by Rep. Emerson, the state’s annual construction budget, known as the capital outlay bill. This year’s bill includes the statewide and Acadiana-based investments listed below, which have been slated for near-term funding through Priority 1 (P1) cash lines of credit or direct appropriations from various state funds:

- **\$39.4 million** for statewide port construction and development (TTF)
- **\$39.4 million** for UL Lafayette (P1, Gen. Fund, Bond Proceeds)
- **\$20 million** for Statewide Flood Control Program (TTF)
- **\$20 million** for the Acadiana Gulf of Mexico Access Channel (P1)
- **\$13.2 million** for LSU Eunice (P1, Bond Proceeds, Cap. Outlay Savings, Fees/Self-Gen)
- **\$13 million** for University Avenue Corridor improvements (P1)
- **\$13 million** for Bayou Vermilion Flood Control project (P1)
- **\$7.2 million** for Acadiana Regional Airport improvements (P1)
- **\$5 million** for roundabouts in Lafayette (P1)
- **\$4 million** for the Lafayette Metropolitan Expressway (P1)
- **\$1.2 million** for LA 13 in Acadia Parish (P1)
- **\$1 million** for the Bayou Plaquemine Brulé Bridge replacement (P1)

Several other notable projects are teed up for millions in potential future state funding through non-cash lines of credit, or Priority 5 (P5).

- **\$188 million** for I-49 South (P5)
- **\$35 million** for a new Lafayette Parish Jail (P5)
- **\$10 million** for a Performing Arts Center Complex at UL Lafayette (P5)

Many more road and bridge, higher education, and community projects in Acadiana were earmarked investment in the State’s annual construction budget – review the full HB 2 [HERE](#).

1A thanks **House Ways and Means Chair Julie Emerson** for leading the capital outlay budget through the Legislature and for prioritizing investments in critical infrastructure projects in Acadiana.

## THAT'S A WRAP

As always, 1A worked to amplify the business community’s voice on priority issues during the Regular Session, ensuring a regular presence at the State Capitol and swift communication of 1A policy positions to legislators throughout the session.

1A would like to thank Tommy Hebert of CLECO for chairing our Governmental Affairs Committee, a group of leaders with invaluable experience in business, government relations, and advocacy. Tremendous thanks as well to 1A investor [The Picard Group](#) for helping to represent 1A at the Capitol, and to 1A Investor [Centanni Communications](#) for providing 1A with access to [My Capitol Watchdog](#), a tracking tool that helps us stay on top of legislative action.

## RECOGNIZING SERVICE

Most of all, we would like to give **special thanks to our 1A-region legislators** for their tireless service and leadership on behalf of Acadiana.

### 1A-REGION LEGISLATORS



Senator  
Mark Abraham



Senator  
Robert Allain



Senator  
Gerald Boudreaux



Senator  
Heather Cloud



Senator  
Jean-Paul Coussan



Senator  
Bob Hensgens



Senator  
Blake Miguez



Representative  
Beryl Amedée



Representative  
Gerald "Beau"  
Beaulieu, IV



Representative  
Ryan Bourriaque



Representative  
Chad Boyer



Representative  
Marcus Bryant



Representative  
Rhonda Butler



Representative  
Josh Carlson



Representative  
Tehmi Chassion



Representative  
Phillip DeVillier



Representative  
Julie Emerson



Representative  
Troy Hebert



Representative  
Chance Henry

Speaker of the House



Representative  
Jacob Landry



Representative  
Dustin Miller



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