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THURSDAY, JANUARY 9-15, 2025

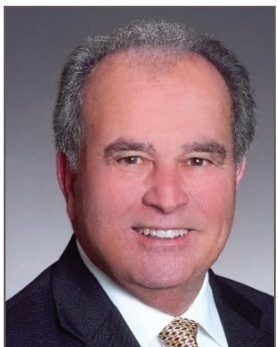
A PEOPLE'S PUBLICATION

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## East Baton Rouge Parish School Board Elects New Leadership in Unified Vote



Shashonnie Steward



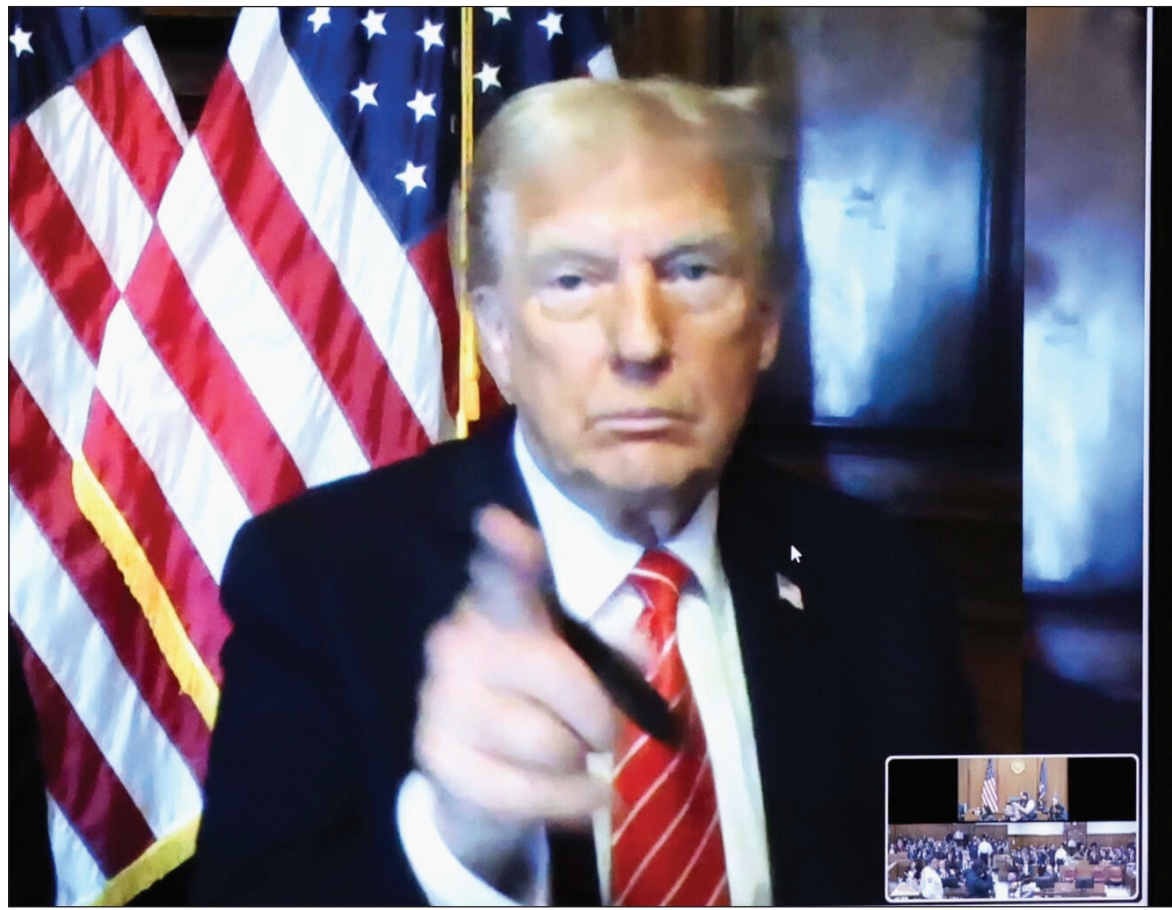
Michael Gaudet

BATON ROUGE, La. — The atmosphere inside the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board meeting Thursday night felt noticeably different from the contentious energy of last year's leadership election. The tension that once divided board members had been replaced with a sense of calm determination as they cast their votes for new leadership.

Shashonnie Steward, seated at the long table alongside her colleagues, exuded quiet confidence as the nominations began. When the votes were tallied, it became clear: Steward had won the presidency with an

See **VOTING**, on page 3

# TRUMP'S CONVICTION: A Former President Now with a Felony Record



U.S. President-elect Donald Trump appears remotely for a sentencing hearing in front of New York State Judge Juan Merchan at Manhattan Criminal Court on Jan. 10, 2025 in New York City. (Photo by Brendan McDermid-Pool/Getty Images)

"Donald Trump's conviction creates a constitutional paradox," said legal analyst Maya Robinson. "He remains free to run for and serve as president, yet he's legally categorized alongside those who've committed serious crimes."

By Matt Washington  
BR Weekly Press Newspaper

NEW YORK, NY — One thing is certain: Trump's place in history is undeniable, not just as a former president but as a felon with a capital "F." Donald J. Trump has always been a figure of superlatives, both self-proclaimed and historical. From billionaire businessman to reality TV star, and later, to the 45th president of the United States, Trump has consistently shattered norms. Today, he adds another unprecedented title to his résumé: convicted felon.

Following weeks of dramatic court-

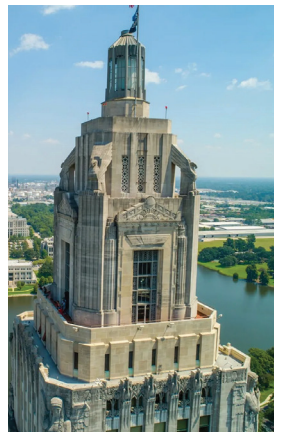
room proceedings, Trump was convicted on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records—a verdict that cements his place in history, not just as a polarizing political figure, but as the first U.S. president to carry the weight of a felony conviction. The implications of this outcome ripple far beyond the courtroom, sending shockwaves through the political and legal landscapes.

### The Charges and Conviction

At the heart of Trump's conviction lies a meticulously constructed case by

See **FELONY**, on page 2

## Louisiana Ethics Board Delays Public Disclosure of Governor's Staff Financial Records



For seven months, the Louisiana Board of Ethics withheld financial disclosure forms for five senior members of Governor Jeff Landry's staff, despite state laws requiring their public availability. The forms, meant to ensure transparency and deter corruption, were due May 15 but only appeared on the ethics board's website in December.

The delayed forms included disclosures for Chief of Staff Kyle Ruckert, Policy Director Millard Mulé, General Counsel Angélique Freel, Deputy Chief of Staff André Miller, and Legislative Director Lance Maxwell. Elise Cazes, Chief of Staff to First Lady Sharon Landry, also had her forms withheld, though she was not legally required to submit them.

Personal financial disclosure forms reveal officials' income sources, spouses' employment, investments, property ownership, and charitable affiliations. Public access to these documents aims to ensure

See **RECORDS**, on page 3

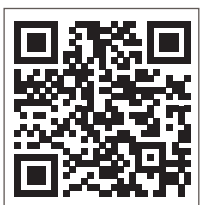
### READ ONLINE

La. Workforce Commission Highlights Resources Amid Benefit Changes

Governor Declares State of Emergency as Fire Threaten Southern California

The Power of Love in Shaping Louisiana's Future

Louisiana to End Property Insurance Assessment Early, Waive Surcharge for Policyholders



## North Baton Rouge Takes Center Stage in New Blight Cleanup Initiative

By Ivory Payne  
BR WPress Newspaper

BATON ROUGE, La. — Baton Rouge's ongoing battle against blight is expanding with a fresh focus on North Baton Rouge. A new initiative, Keep Jaguar Nation Beautiful, aims to build on existing efforts to combat litter and restore pride in the area.

Pat McCallister-LeDuff, president of the Scotlandville Community Development Corporation, has spent decades addressing the issue and sees this program as a pivotal step forward.

See **CLEANUP**, on page 3



A decaying, abandoned house in North Baton Rouge serves as a stark reminder of the blight issues facing the community. Local initiatives aim to tackle such eyesores and restore pride to the area.

## First U.S. Death from H5N1 Bird Flu Confirmed in Louisiana

By Tiffany Bradford  
BR WPress Newspaper

The first known human death from H5N1 bird flu in the United States has been confirmed by the Louisiana Department of Health. The victim, an individual over 65 years old with underlying health conditions, contracted the virus after exposure to a backyard flock and wild birds.

Despite thorough in-

See **BIRD FLU**, on page 3



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# STATE & LOCAL

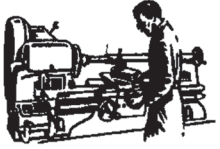
## La. Workforce Commission Highlights Resources Amid Benefit Changes



BATON ROUGE, La. — As Louisiana implements significant changes to its unemployment benefits program, the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) is emphasizing its wide range of resources designed to help job seekers get back on their feet.

The LWC's programs aim to ease the transition for residents impacted by new unemployment rules that reduce benefit duration from 26 weeks to a range of 12 to 20 weeks, depending on the state's unemployment rate.

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mission (LWC) is emphasizing its wide range of resources designed to help job seekers get back on their feet.

"We're here to help," said Robert Wooley of the LWC. "From resume-building to skill development and grant opportunities, we offer programs to assist individuals in finding new employment and improving their long-term career prospects."

The LWC's programs aim to ease the transition for residents impacted by new unemployment rules that reduce benefit duration from 26 weeks to a range of 12 to 20 weeks, depending on the state's unemployment rate. Currently, regions with unemployment rates at or below 5% offer benefits for 12 weeks, while areas exceeding 8.5% extend coverage

to 20 weeks. Weekly payments remain capped at \$275.

The LWC's workforce development programs include job training, career counseling, and tools for enhancing employability. These resources are available statewide, providing vital support for those navigating a rapidly changing job market.

"Whether you need help creating a competitive resume, updating your skills, or exploring job opportunities, we have services tailored to your needs," Wooley said.

While the changes aim to align benefits with the state's job market conditions, some advocates worry about their impact on regions with higher unemployment.

"For instance, East Baton Rouge has a low unemploy-

ment rate of under 4%, but in areas like Tensas Parish and East Carroll Parish, it's over 9%," said Jan Moller, a policy advocate. "The state average doesn't reflect the unique challenges in these regions, making resources from the LWC even more critical."

In 2024, an average of 1,700 Louisianans applied for unemployment benefits each week, with one in three exhausting their benefits before securing new employment. This underscores the importance of the LWC's support programs in helping job seekers reenter the workforce quickly.

Despite concerns, Wooley is optimistic about the program's potential to adapt as needed. "This is a policy we need to try. If issues arise, we're prepared to work with the legislature to make necessary adjustments," he said.

By placing a strong emphasis on workforce development and providing resources to support residents, the Louisiana Workforce Commission aims to mitigate the challenges posed by these changes while fostering a more resilient labor force.

### FELONY

from page 1

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office. The charges stemmed from alleged hush-money payments made during Trump's 2016 presidential campaign to suppress damaging information, including payments to adult film actress Stormy Daniels. Prosecutors argued that Trump orchestrated a scheme to falsify financial records in an attempt to conceal the payments and their purpose, constituting a violation of state and federal laws.

The jury, composed of 12 ordinary citizens tasked with weighing extraordinary allegations, delivered a guilty verdict on all counts. The case itself represents a rare instance of a high-profile figure being held accountable under New York's penal code for business-related crimes.

Trump's defense team mounted an aggressive challenge, portraying the trial as politically motivated and asserting that the charges lacked merit. Yet, the evidence—a trail of emails, ledger entries, and testimony from former Trump confidants like Michael Cohen—proved too compelling to ignore.

### The Sentence: Unprecedented and Controversial

Judge Juan Merchan's decision to impose an unconditional discharge—a sentence with no jail time, probation, or fines—was a calculated one, aimed at balancing the need for accountability with the unique constraints surrounding a former and potentially future president.

"Justice must be impartial, but it must also recognize the extraordinary circumstances of this case," Merchan said during sentencing. The judge underscored that Trump's status as a felon carries its own weight, particularly given the public scrutiny that will follow him indefinitely.

Legal scholars have debated the implications of such a sentence. On one hand, Trump's conviction alone sets a precedent that no individual, regardless of status, is above the law. On the other hand, critics argue that the lack of tangible punishment undermines the principles of equal justice.

### A Permanent Mark on Trump's Legacy

In New York, felony convictions are not eligible for expungement, meaning Trump's record as a felon is permanent. The conviction may eventually be sealed after eight years, but the historical and reputational damage is irreversible. This legal status brings significant, if limited, consequences.

For instance, Trump's New York firearm permit has already been revoked. Ad-

ditionally, he is barred from serving in certain state-level roles, though his eligibility to hold federal office, including the presidency, remains intact under the Constitution.

"Donald Trump's conviction creates a constitutional paradox," said legal analyst Maya Robinson. "He remains free to run for and serve as president, yet he's legally categorized alongside those who've committed serious crimes."

### The Political Fallout

The conviction is a lightning rod for political division. Trump's supporters view the trial as evidence of a "deep state" conspiracy aimed at silencing their champion. They've doubled down on their support, with Trump leveraging the conviction as a rallying cry for his 2024 presidential campaign.

Meanwhile, his critics see the verdict as long-overdue accountability for a man who has long operated with impunity.

"This case sends a message: no matter how powerful you are, the law applies to you," said District Attorney Alvin Bragg. Yet, even Bragg's supporters acknowledge the conviction raises thorny questions about justice, power, and privilege.

### What's Next for Trump?

Trump's legal troubles are far from over. He faces additional investigations and lawsuits, including a federal probe into his handling of classified documents and a civil case in Georgia over alleged election interference.

His defense team has vowed to appeal the New York conviction, a process that could drag on for years. In the meantime, Trump is expected to weaponize the verdict in his campaign rhetoric, casting himself as a martyr for his movement.

### A Legacy Defined by Contradictions

Donald Trump's ascent to the presidency was marked by defiance of norms; his return to the political stage as a convicted felon represents the ultimate challenge to America's legal and political systems. For many, his conviction symbolizes the resilience of the rule of law. For others, it exposes the limitations of a justice system unequipped to deal with individuals of Trump's stature.

As Trump himself said during the trial, "They're not coming after me—they're coming after you. I'm just in the way." Whether those words were prophetic or self-serving, they capture the essence of a man whose life, legacy, and now legal status continue to dominate the national conversation.

Trump's place in history is undeniable, not just as a former president but as a felon with a capital "F."



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**BIRD FLU**

from page 1

vestigations, Louisiana health officials have not identified additional human cases linked to this infection.

Dr. Richard Webby, director of the World Health Organization's Collaborating Center for Studies on the Ecology of Influenza at St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, described the development as tragic but anticipated. "We've studied this virus for over 25 years, and this is likely the nastiest variant we've seen. That it has caused a fatal infection is not surprising," he said.

Since 2003, the World Health Organization has recorded around 900 human cases of H5N1 worldwide, with a case fatality rate of approximately 50%. However, experts believe the actual fatality rate may be lower due to underreporting of mild cases. Even with a reduced fatality rate of 5%, the virus remains highly concerning compared to the estimated 2.6% fatality rate of the original COVID-19 strain.

The Louisiana case involved the D1.1 clade of H5N1, a strain circulating in wild birds and poultry. This variant differs from others affecting dairy cattle and

was linked to a critical case in a Canadian teenager, who ultimately recovered after intensive care.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted genetic changes in the virus from the Louisiana patient, suggesting an increased ability to infect human upper airways and potential for easier person-to-person transmission. These mutations, however, were not observed in the birds the patient encountered, indicating they developed post-infection. CDC officials are examining blood samples to further understand the virus's evolution.

Despite these findings, the CDC maintains that the overall risk to the public remains low. "No person-to-person transmission has been identified, and no significant virologic changes have been detected in wild birds or poultry to raise the risk to human health," the agency said in a statement.

Health officials urge caution for individuals who work with birds or livestock, as well as those exposed to sick or dead animals. Recommendations include:

Avoid direct contact with sick or dead animals

See **INFLATION**, on page 5

**NATIONAL**

**Governor Declares State of Emergency as Fire Threaten Southern California**



Governor Gavin Newsom has declared a state of emergency in response to extreme fire weather and hazardous winds sweeping across Southern California.

**PACIFIC PALISADES**—Governor Gavin Newsom has declared a state of emergency in response to extreme fire weather and hazardous winds sweeping across Southern California. Meeting with first responders in Pacific Palisades on Tuesday, Newsom emphasized the urgency of the situation as the Palisades Fire rapidly grew to over 1,260 acres, forcing thousands to evacuate.

California secured a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) from FEMA to ensure

sufficient resources for suppressing the blaze. The Governor also announced the deployment of additional firefighting crews, engines, and aerial support to high-risk areas, including Los Angeles, Riverside, and Ventura counties.

"This is a highly dangerous windstorm creating extreme fire risks," Newsom said. "We're already seeing its destructive impacts in Pacific Palisades. Follow emergency guidance and stay vigilant."

The National Weather Service has issued a warning for "life-threatening"

winds across the region, with gusts in Los Angeles County reaching up to 100 mph. The hazardous conditions are expected to persist through Wednesday evening.

State and local agencies have prepositioned firefighting equipment, including helicopters, water tenders, and dozers, to respond to potential outbreaks. Cal Fire resources have been strategically moved from Northern to Southern California to bolster efforts.

Safety Tips During Wildfires and High Winds Sign Up for Alerts:

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• **Evacuate Promptly:** Follow warnings and evacuation orders immediately.

• **Stay Inside:** Avoid being outside during high winds to minimize risk from flying debris and downed power lines.

• **Prepare for Outages:** Have plans for medical devices, backup power, and emergency radios.

For more information on active emergencies and preparedness, visit [ready.ca.gov](http://ready.ca.gov).

**RECORDS**

from page 1

accountability and prevent conflicts of interest.

The forms were initially hidden after Landry's office raised security concerns over requiring staff home addresses. Special Counsel Emily Andrews argued that employees should not risk personal safety for public transparency. The ethics board delayed posting the forms until addresses were redacted, a step taken following a November board meeting.

Louisiana law mandates Tier 1 disclosure forms, which include home addresses, for high-ranking offi-

cials like the governor's staff. While most state employees file less stringent forms, the Legislature expanded Tier 1 requirements in 2008 during a push for greater government accountability.

Attorney General Liz Murrill issued a legal opinion supporting redaction, citing privacy protections in the Louisiana Constitution. However, transparency advocates argue that such changes should be legislated, not unilaterally implemented by the ethics board.

The ethics board ultimately posted the redacted forms in December, shortly after inquiries from a journalist spotlighted the missing documents.

**VOTING**

from page 1

overwhelming 8-1 vote, earning the trust of nearly all her fellow board members.

Fellow nominees Emily Soulé and Patrick Martin, who had also been nominated for the position, chose to support Steward once her decisive majority became apparent.

"I'm deeply humbled by this honor," Steward said after the vote, her voice steady but filled with emotion. "This board has incredible potential to make meaningful changes for our students, and I'm ready to lead alongside all of you."

**A Unified Board**

The meeting's orderly tone starkly contrasted with the contentious leadership election of 2023, where disagreements and heated exchanges dominated the proceedings. On Thursday, nominations were handled swiftly, and members moved efficiently to voting without debate.

The election of starkly contrasted as vice president was closer but equally significant. Gaudet, a board veteran who previously served as president from 2019 to 2020, narrowly defeated Soulé in a 5-4 vote. His election brought together a coalition that included outgoing president Carla Powell-Lewis and the board's three other Black members: Dadrus Lanus, Cliff Lewis, and Steward.

The decision reflected a

commitment to collaboration and diversity, with Steward, a Black woman, and Gaudet, a White man, continuing the board's tradition of racial representation in leadership roles.

"Ms. Steward, I know you'll lead this board with strength and vision," Lanus said after the vote. "And Mr. Gaudet, your experience is going to be invaluable in helping us navigate this year."

**Reflections and New Directions**

As the meeting continued, outgoing president Powell-Lewis took a moment to reflect on her year at the helm. Her voice carried pride and hope as she addressed her colleagues.

"This past year has been the highlight of my educational career," Powell-Lewis said. "I'm here to support anyone who needs it. We have the opportunity to keep building on the progress we've made."

Powell-Lewis' tenure as president was defined by a challenging superintendent search that concluded in July 2023 with the appointment of veteran educator and Metro Councilman LaMont Cole. The search had initially stalled as the board struggled to reach a consensus, but Powell-Lewis played a key role in helping the board move forward.

**A Pivotal Year Ahead**

Steward's presidency begins at a critical juncture for the board. The district faces

pressing challenges, from improving student performance to addressing teacher shortages and balancing budgets. Steward, who had initially indicated she wouldn't seek a leadership position this year, said she felt called to step up after reflecting on the district's needs.

"This isn't just about leadership—it's about service," Steward said. "I believe we're ready to work together to create a stronger future for our students, families, and educators."

Gaudet, seated to Steward's right, nodded in agreement. "We have a lot of work ahead of us, but this board has the tools to make real progress," he said.

**Optimism in the Room**

As the meeting wrapped up, the mood in the room was optimistic. The seamless transition in leadership and the cooperative tone set by Thursday's vote signaled a promising start to 2024. Board members exchanged congratulatory remarks and commitments to collaborate in the months ahead.

Lanus captured the spirit of the night as he addressed his colleagues one last time: "We've got the right team in place. Now, let's get to work."

With Steward and Gaudet at the helm, the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board begins the year with a clear mandate to prioritize students and strengthen the district's connection to the community it serves.

**CLEANUP**

from page 1

"At one point, it was really a dump," said LeDuff. "It's not where it needs to be, but it's not where it used to be."

The initiative draws inspiration from the success of Keep Tiger Town Beautiful, a volunteer-led organization in South Baton Rouge that organizes weekly cleanups. Jennifer Richardson, the group's founder, is collaborating with North Baton Rouge leaders to expand these efforts citywide.

"Jennifer and her team have done an amazing job in the south, and now those

efforts are coming north to enhance what's already in place," said LeDuff. "This isn't about reinventing the wheel. It's about providing the resources we need—picking up trash and ensuring the city follows through to collect it before it scatters again."

The collaboration marks a shared dream for both Richardson and LeDuff.

"This is like a dream come true for both of us because now we can serve all of Baton Rouge," said Richardson. "Nobody will be left out."

While the initiative promises a significant impact, both leaders stress that a cleaner city requires collective responsi-

bility. "This isn't a once-or-twice-a-year thing," Richardson explained. "We need to stay consistent—every day, everywhere."

LeDuff echoed the sentiment, emphasizing education and inclusivity as key to long-term success.

"We need to teach our children, starting in elementary school, not to litter. Everyone must take part in this effort," she said.

The first cleanup event under Keep Jaguar Nation Beautiful is set for January 18, signaling a united push toward a more vibrant and litter-free Baton Rouge.

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# RELIGION



## The Power of Love in Shaping Louisiana's Future

By Chris Altazan  
In His Honor Ministries

As Louisiana navigates a complex political landscape, including Project 2025 laws and redistricting, it's time to consider a transformative idea: What if we truly lived by John 13:34, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"? This teaching, alongside the Ten Commandments, offers a blueprint for unity, justice, and compassion.

### The Ten Commandments Are Not the Problem

The Ten Commandments provide a moral foundation, but their power lies in being lived out—especially by those who lead. As Exodus 18:21 teaches, leaders must be "trustworthy men who fear God" and act with integrity. Laws and pol-

icies mean little without leaders who embody justice and fairness. Micah 6:8 reminds us, "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." These principles must guide governance, not just be displayed in classrooms or courthouses.

### Governance Rooted in Love

If leaders embraced the command to "love one another," decisions would prioritize the needs of the vulnerable and marginalized. Redistricting, for example, would focus on fairness rather than political gain. Romans 13:10 states, "Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment



Pastor Ivory Payne

of the law." When love is the foundation, partisanship gives way to collaboration, and policies become tools for inclusion and equity.

### Education as a Reflection of Love

A love-centered approach would revolutionize education. Schools would be funded equitably, teachers would be respected and fairly compensated, and every child would have access to quality resources. As 1 John 3:18 urges, "Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." Investing in education is an act of love that empowers future generations and strengthens communities.

### Civic Engagement and the Call to Love

When love governs civic life, people feel valued and motivated to engage. Voter turnout would increase as citizens see their voices matter and their

leaders act with care and respect. Galatians 5:14 sums it up: "For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Love can transform public policy into a force that serves everyone equally.

### The Challenge and Opportunity

The challenge is clear: moving beyond symbolic displays of commandments to fully living them out. If leaders model love, integrity, and justice, they set an example for communities to follow. When paired with the greatest commandment of love, the Ten Commandments could lead Louisiana toward fairness, unity, and opportunity for all.

If we take John 13:34 to heart, Louisiana could be transformed—not by laws alone, but by the love that binds its people and leaders together.



## Embracing God's Purpose in a Changing World

By Chris Altazan  
In His Honor Ministries

In an era of unprecedented change, Christians find themselves navigating a world that seems to shift beneath their feet daily. From technological advances to social transformations, the pace of change can feel overwhelming. Yet, as believers, we are called to remember that God remains constant amidst all transformation: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Our role as Christians isn't to resist change but to discern God's purpose within it. Just as the early church faced radical transitions from its Jewish roots to a global faith, today's believers must adapt while holding firm to eternal truths. The Gospel message remains unchanging, but our methods of sharing it must speak to contemporary hearts.

Consider how the Apostle Paul adapted his approach when speaking to different audiences—addressing philosophers in Athens differently than he did Jewish scholars in Jerusalem. Similarly, we are called to be "all things to all people" (1 Corinthians 9:22)

while maintaining our biblical foundation.

The digital revolution, environmental challenges, and shifting cultural values present both challenges and opportunities for Christian witness. Rather than retreating into comfortable bubbles, we are called to engage thoughtfully with these changes, always asking: "How can we demonstrate Christ's love in this new context?"

This engagement requires wisdom, discernment, and courage. We must distinguish between cultural preferences and biblical principles, between traditions and truth. Prayer becomes essential as we seek God's guidance in applying timeless wisdom to contemporary challenges.

As we face world change, let us remember that our God is neither surprised nor unprepared. He works through all circumstances to accomplish His purposes. Our call is to be salt and light in whatever context we find ourselves, trusting that He who began a good work will carry it to completion (Philippians 1:6).

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**Worship Times:**  
CrossWalk Classes: Sundays 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM  
Sunday Worship Experience: 11:00 AM  
Uplift Training: Thursdays 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
5856 Greenwell Springs Road • Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806  
Telephone: (225) 926-0246 • Facsimile: (225) 925-8022  
Toll Free: 888-700-6174  
Websites: [www.newhopebr.com](http://www.newhopebr.com)

Rev. Leo Cyrus Sr., Pastor

**CHURCH SCHEDULE**

Sunday Morning Worship	10:45 AM
Lords Supper	3rd Sundays
Sunday School	9:30 AM
Prayer Service	Wed. @ 6:00 PM
Bible Study	Wed- @ 7:00 PM

Mission Statement: New Hope Baptist Church is a family of baptized believers who worship the Lord our God in spirit and in truth, teach the saved to reach the lost and minister to the needs of others, while encouraging one another through acts of love and living in obedience to Gods Word

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# BUSINESS

## Louisiana to End Property Insurance Assessment Early, Waive Surcharge for Policyholders

Louisiana Citizens Property Insurance Corp. has announced that a 1.36% assessment on property policyholders will be terminated in April, more than a year ahead of its original expiration date in June 2026. The insurer's board of directors approved the decision, marking a small but symbolic step toward easing financial burdens on property owners.

The assessment was initially imposed to repay bonds issued to cover debt incurred after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, according to the Louisiana Department of Insurance (LDI). Insurance Commissioner Tim Temple, who also chairs Citizens' board, acknowledged the limited financial relief this change offers but emphasized its broader implications for affordability.

"While the savings policyholders will see as a result of this change are not that significant compared to the high premiums we all pay for property insurance, every little bit helps as we work to create a more available and affordable market in Louisiana," Temple said.

Louisiana Citizens policy-



holders will also benefit from a waiver of the 10% Citizens surcharge on policy enrollments or renewals. Effective January 1, this waiver will remain in place for three years and is part of property insurance reforms enacted in the summer of 2024. The surcharge was originally designed to ensure Citizens' policies remained noncompetitive with those offered by private insurers.

John Ford, deputy commissioner of public affairs at the LDI, described the waiver as a temporary measure to alleviate financial pressures on policyholders while broader legislative reforms take effect.

The changes come amid cautious optimism about the state's evolving insurance landscape. Mark Friedlander, director of corporate communications at the Insurance Information Institute, credited recent legislative reforms with helping stabilize Louisiana's insurance market.

"We hope additional reforms addressing legal system abuse will further improve market conditions and enable private insurers to profitably write business in the state," Friedlander said.

In 2023, State Farm Group led Louisiana's homeowners insurance market with a 21.94%

share of direct premiums written, followed by Allstate Insurance Group at 13.88%, USAA Group at 7.6%, Liberty Mutual Insurance Companies at 7.11%, and Slaine Insurance Group at 5.39%, according to BestLink data.

The recent changes aim to bring a measure of financial relief to policyholders while encouraging a more competitive and stable property insurance market in Louisiana. With ongoing legislative efforts, officials remain hopeful for continued progress in addressing the state's insurance challenges.

### JUMP from page 3

or their droppings.

Keep pets away from sick animals and their waste.

Cook poultry, eggs, and animal products thoroughly to prevent cross-contamination.

Avoid consuming raw milk or unpasteurized dairy products from infected animals.

Monitor for symptoms such as respiratory issues or red eyes after exposure and inform healthcare providers of recent contact with animals.

For backyard poultry keepers and farmworkers, health professionals recommend seasonal flu vaccinations to reduce the risk of co-infection with common flu strains.

The USDA encourages reporting dead or sick birds or animals to its hotline at 1-866-536-7593.

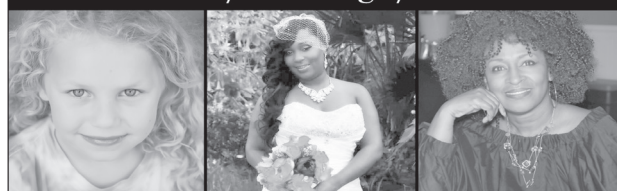
While the Louisiana case marks a significant development, experts emphasize vigilance and preventive actions to minimize risks and prevent future infections.

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### CLASSIFIEDS CLASSIFIEDS CLASSIFIEDS

#### Michael Bell Jr Public Notice of Intent to Sue Regarding Breach of Accord and Satisfaction Agreement, UCC Violation And Debt Bondage Violation

Date: January 09, 2024  
To: ATTN: CEO Jane Verret  
Campus Federal Credit Union  
6230 Perkins Road  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Certified Mail Number: 9589071052700307522592

From: Michael Bell Jr  
520 Wooddale Blvd Apt 119  
Baton Rouge, La 70806

This Serves as a formal notice of intent to Sue Regarding Breach of Accord and Satisfaction Agreement we entered into on March 28, 2024 pertaining to Acct # 10812409, UCC Violation, Damages and Debt Bondage Violation

Background:

On March 28, 2024 Campus Federal Credit Union reached an agreement to settle a bonafide dispute related to my account. The terms of the agreement stipulated that Louisiana Revised Statutes Title 10, Section 3-311 applies when the claim is unliquidated or disputed in good faith by the debtor. This statute allows writing on a check or money order stating "payment in full" as evidence of Accord and Satisfaction if certain conditions are met. In good faith I fulfilled my obligation under the agreement by disputing the debt by administratively and notifying as of no repayment in 90 days constitute full satisfaction. I informed them this was coming in my bonafide dispute and when it came, which shows the mutual consent in good faith!

Notation of the negotiable instrument Money order for less the full amount. Campus Federal Credit Union has failed to uphold its obligations under the Accord and Satisfaction Agreement under the rules of Louisiana by knowingly accepting money order with clear and conspicuous restrictive endorsement on March 28, 2024 money order # 29266932306amount \$733.36.

This account is in regard to a dispute "in good faith" barring Campus Federal Credit Union from suing for the remaining balance. Breach of Agreement has occurred by continuing reporting a balance to credit report agencies after the acceptance, endorsing and cashing of Money order. In which I have a Copy of the Money order where Campus Federal Credit Union endorsed. The Federal Reserve Bank mailed me the money order inquiry. Campus Federal Credit Union opportunity to refund Money order lapse on June 29, 2024 ( 90-day refund period per Louisiana Statute).

The breach has caused significant harm, such as financial loss and repayment after March 28,2024 should be refunded totaling \$6,600.24 from April to December of 2024. Also affecting debt to income ratio on credit report.

UCC violation as I mailed a UCC 9-210 and no response was mailed back to me in 14 days by law. Also mailed a billing error notice, which no response has been mailed back at all. This relinquishes any alleged debt that Campus may try to enforce

Furthermore, I mailed out a default notice. Everything is very details and properly documented.

On November 29, 204 I reached out to Ms. Dayana Alexander. I must also inform you that I am a victim of human trafficking, specifically debt bondage, as determined by Agape Advocate Consulting, Founder Dayana Alexander Authorized Agency, an agency appointed by the Attorney General. This designation provides me with certain legal protections, including immunity from debt collection and enforcement under such conditions. I am entitled to certain legal protections under federal law.

Any further attempts by your company to collect, enforce, or report on this is a violation of these federal protections, will result in immediate legal action. I will not hesitate to pursue a formal complaint with the Attorney General's office, file complaints with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and other relevant authorities, and seek judicial remedies for any violations. This bondage is causing severe Stress and more harm of financial loss!

As the I am the plaintiff who uses accord and satisfaction, ( he ) retain the right to assert (his ) claims regarding the prior contract. See Restatement (Second) of Contracts § 281 and § 3, the presence of an accord and satisfaction does not automatically stop the plaintiff from asserting a breach of contract claim. Plaintiff would like to educate defendant that no argument that it can only serve as an affirmative defense does not apply in Plaintiff situation, as his actions and the language used conspicuous indicate clearly that he is pursuing enforcement (the satisfaction) of the new agreement (the Accord.) So any argument of being an affirmative defense only does not negate his claim! And I have Cited cases to support if lawsuit action is needed!

Intent to Sue:

If I do not receive a satisfactory response within 14 days from the date of this local publication, confirming that Campus Federal Credit Union will take the necessary steps to fulfill its obligations under the Accord and Satisfaction Agreement, I will be forced to pursue legal action to enforce the agreement and seek compensation for the damages I have incurred.

I am confident that we can resolve this matter amicably. However, I am prepared to take all necessary legal steps to protect my rights. Take heed that a Federal case will be filed in the USDC Middle District of Louisiana promptly if Breach is not resolved.

I am respectfully giving Campus Federal Credit Union 14 business days to Cease debt, refund me and give notice of title details will be on the way in writing. It would be wise to do what's Right.

Please contact me at the address listed above or on account file to discuss this matter further.

Thanks,  
Michael Bell Jr

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