



The Weekly Press

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Gov. Edwards Extends COVID Public Health Emergency Order, Without Required Mitigation Measures

Gov. John Bel Edwards extended Louisiana's COVID public health emergency order to support Louisiana's response to the pandemic, but without any remaining required mitigation measures.

The Governor's Office, the Louisiana Department of Health and the CDC still recommend that all people wear masks when they are indoors in public or in a large outdoor crowd while all areas of the state are considered high transmission areas for the coronavirus.



Gov. John Bel Edwards

"While we remain in an Omicron-fueled surge, we are definitely on the down swing. There is a lot of COVID out there in Louisiana, and fortunately we have many more tools available to us now to prevent severe illness and death including safe and effective vaccines, booster doses, therapeutic interventions, and better quality masks. While my order does not include any required mitigation measures, it is very important that people continue to take into account their own personal risk of serious illness if they get COVID, including if they are immunocompromised, have comorbid health conditions or are unvaccinated," Gov. Edwards said. "I hope we never go back to the kind of strict mitigation measures needed before the vaccines. I also pray each day that more Louisianians will go sleeves up against COVID and get their vaccines and booster doses, because we know these save lives.

"As we move deeper into the Mardi Gras season and with the continued return of big events

See HEALTH, on page 4

WEATHER



MON. 02/21
Showers
High 79°.



TUE. 02/22
Showers
High 84°.



WED. 02/23
Showers
High 82°.



THUR. 02/24
Showers
High 75°.

INDEX

State & Local	2 & 3
Religion	4
Church Directory	4
Business	5
Business Directory	5
Classifieds	5
Other News	6

Louisiana lawmaker blasts colleagues after they scuttle his redistricting bill

GOP representative calls Legislature 'the laziest group of people I've ever worked with'



State Rep. Barry Ivey, R-Baton Rouge, talks with colleagues in the Louisiana House of Representatives on Feb. 2, 2022. (Greg LaRose/Louisiana Illuminator)

"When groups of people in our state do not vote because they feel that their vote doesn't count... what do we say? We're saying we haven't evolved at all," Ivey said

"We all say, 'It's not about race. We've grown. We've matured, We've evolved, right? We're enlightened,'" Ivey said. "But what do we do? We repeat ourselves because we don't learn from history."

BY: JC CANICOSA
Louisiana Illuminator

Republicans in the Louisiana Legislature have dominated the ongoing redistricting session, almost exclusively advancing maps that favor their party retaining its healthy majority in Congress and state bodies. But one GOP member had choice words for his colleagues Wednesday after he bucked the partisan trend and sought to add a minority district to the Louisiana Supreme Court.

After his bill was tabled without discussion on the Louisiana House of Representatives floor in

a rare procedural move, Rep. Barry Ivey, R-Central, vented for more than eight minutes in a speech to members.

"We all say, 'It's not about race. We've grown. We've matured, We've evolved, right? We're enlightened,'" Ivey said. "But what do we do? We repeat ourselves because we don't learn from history."

Ivey's bill was one of four options lawmakers advanced with new Supreme Court district boundaries. There are seven seats on the court, with one representing a district with a minority population of more than 50%. Rep. Wilford Carter, D-Lake Charles, has two bills that add a

second minority district, and both advanced Wednesday from the House redistricting committee.

Another bill from Sen. Sharon Hewitt, R-Slidell, keeps the court's minority district count at one. The House redistricting committee also moved her map favorably Wednesday. It already has the full Senate's approval.

Timing is a factor for the bills still alive in the redistricting process. Legislative leaders have said

See BILL, on page 4

Legislative Black Caucus responds to vote to table House Bill

The members of the LLBC commend Representative Barry Ivey for doing exactly what we were elected to do: fight for the rights of the people and to create access for the historically disenfranchised. To table a bill for the sake of killing debate is reprehensible.



LLBC Chairman Vincent Pierre

"The people of Louisiana want and deserve representation that is fair, just, courageous, and honorable and that is exactly what they should get."

To not have the courage to go on record with your vote is unworthy of the honor of serving as an elected official in the great State of Louisiana.



Gov. John Bel Edwards

Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, has the right to veto maps that are advanced to him.

tricting session to reapportion representation based on census information—census information that has confirmed growth in the number of Black Louisianians to a full one-third of the overall population. To fail to adequately reapportion our maps according to this information is a dereliction of our duties.

As it stands, the Louisiana Supreme Court only has one majority-minority district out of seven—an even more egregious malapportionment than our Congressional map which only has one majority-minority district out of six. The bill presented by Republican Representative Ivey would

See BLACK CAUCUS, on page 3

LDH does not expect spike in COVID after Mardi Gras, recommends masking if in crowds

BATON ROUGE, La. — COVID-19, much like the beads left behind from Mardi Gras past, is still lingering around Louisiana.

After a surge in Omicron cases, the state is declining in cases. Dr. Joseph Kanter with the Louisiana Department of Health said that is good news as the state heads into Carnival season.

"I don't see Mardi Gras causing us to have another spike particularly because of the time of where it's falling when it's coming down," Dr. Kanter said. "It has the potential to

delay and prolong our downswing so to say. We haven't seen that it's going to happen yet, but it certainly has the potential."

Kanter said as long as families and parade-goers stay out of large crowds, they should be relatively safe from COVID. If you do find yourself in a crowd, he recommends masking.

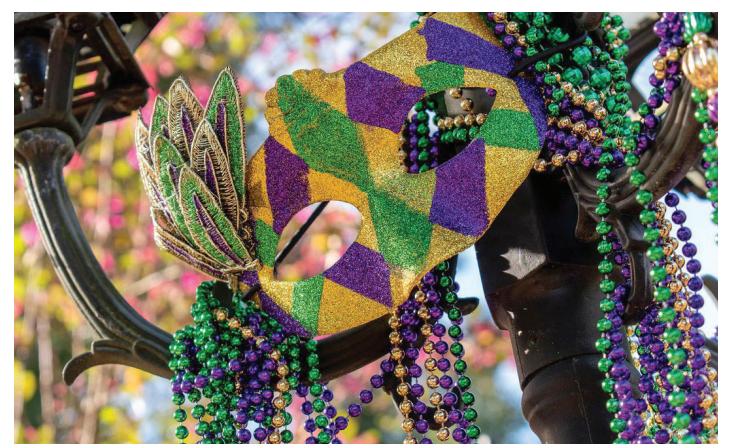
"Going to a parade, if a family is not in a thick crowd, if they're toward the back and there's space around them, that's lower risk. It's not zero risk but

lower risk. If it is crowded at a parade, if they mask that is a way to do it safer," he said. "Nothing is 100%."

In Baton Rouge, the medical director for East Baton Rouge Parish said he is not concerned about COVID running rampant.

"It is the possibility the COVID disease could be transmitted, but we're pretty much on the downhill slide here in Louisiana,"

See MARDI GRAS, on page 3



LOCAL & STATE

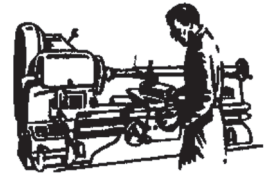
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Mardi Gras Mambo runners parade through downtown Baton Rouge



BATON ROUGE, La. — Runners let the good times roll and paraded their way through downtown Baton Rouge today. The Mardi Gras Mambo is a Carnival Season classic with a “krewes” of over 1,500 runners from across the south. Mild temperatures this morning made the race a breeze for runners, who could choose from several distances including a 10K, 15K, and one mile Fun Run.

29-year-old Felix Martinez Friera, a Baton Rouge local, won the 10K race at 35:06. He was followed shortly after by 36-year-old Daniel

Forman, 35:30, who is also from Baton Rouge. 27-year-old Ryan Williamson was the third male finisher with a time of 37:24.

The first female winner of the 10K race was 35-year-old Jennifer Nickens from Prairieville with a time of 40:09. 44-year-old Maria Cicio, a Baton Rouge local, was the next female to cross the finish line with a time of 41:24. She was followed by 15-year-old Natalie Venkataraman who finished in 42:33.

The first male winner of the 15K race was 36-year-old William Fell, a Baton Rouge local.



He ran the 9.3 mile race in 57:42. 35-year-old Charles Lichenstein from Prairieville finished first in 58:58 followed by 30-year-old Jordan “JJ.” Templet from Breaux Bridge who finished in 59:46.

35-year-old New Orleans resident, Victoria Brignac, was the first female to win the 15K race with a time of 1:00:38. 33-year-old Andrea Alleman from Baton Rouge was the next female to cross the finish line and completed the race in 1:02:30. The third place female finisher was 47-year-old Angel Overstreet from Magee, MS

with a time of 1:05:14.

Started in 1999 by the Baton Rouge Area Sports Foundation, the Mardi Gras Mambo has hosted Baton Rouge’s best 10Ks. The event is now produced by FRESHJUNKIE Racing and supported by sponsors that include BR Area Sports Foundation (SportsBR), Core Power, Raising Cane’s, Baton Rouge Clinic and many more.

The full race results can be found at <https://www.runmambo.com>.



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Louisiana's medical marijuana program still needs some improvements

BATON ROUGE, La. - The state's medical marijuana program was under review at the Capitol Wednesday, Feb. 16.

Lawmakers received updates on the program since it was expanded in January to include smokable cannabis. Folks there hoped to get answers as to why their medical marijuana is still so expensive. The people supposed to give those answers, instead, came empty handed.

"You know, it's the middle of February, so they don't really have numbers to know what flowers done. You heard them say in the meeting that they were afraid to make a statement about that," said Rep. Larry Bagley (R), who chairs the House Health and Welfare Committee.

It's been almost two months since Louisiana's medical marijuana program was expanded to include raw smokable cannabis. The expansion was supposed to help make the medicine more affordable and accessible. But Wednesday, lawmakers found little evidence from licensed growers to support that. In fact, the growers, LSU and Southern, by state law are supposed to present a report each time they come to the Capitol. But, they did not have that either.

"We are guilty as charged on the report, we have no defense," said Calvin Walker, vice chairman of Southern Universities AG Center.

"Even if they don't do the research, they're still supposed to submit a report, and they did not, and we need to see that to know what's going on," Rep. Bagley added.

Patients said their biggest gripe with the program right now, in terms of the flower products, is the lack of quality, accessibility, and still the price of medicine.

Jacob Gulino uses cannabis to treat his anxiety and PTSD and said

the prices are similar to other states, but the quality is not the same.

"The price is really high for the quality you are getting. There are a lot of states that \$50 or \$60 eighths is normal, but you're paying for that premium, that top quality cure, top quality inputs, and everything that's going into the flower itself," said Gulino.

"It's helped me in numerous different ways from mental health, physical health, being able to sleep or concentrate. Now the pricing, for a person who works daily like I do and works for a living, it's accessible, but I can definitely see how people who don't have a constant source of income it can be trivial for them to get the product," said Melissa Do Egitto, another medical marijuana patient.

Capitol Wellness Solutions in Baton Rouge say one of the ways they try to reduce prices is by offering discounts to patients who order online. They say their shelves always have a product available even if one strain is temporarily out.

"Even if they don't have the specific strain that I've been wanting, they always have the backup that works with what I need," Egitto continued.

Egitto said even though the prices are high, knowing where her medicine is coming from and knowing what goes into growing the plant, a few extra bucks are worth the convenience.

The committee said by the time they meet again there should be enough data to show how much the flower form is helping the program.

Rep. Bagley said he even plans to introduce legislation to expand the number of dispensaries and licensed growers for the state.

BLACK CAUCAS from page 1

have presented a bipartisan solution to this malapportionment, and the failure of the Body to vote on it is an embarrassment to the institution.

The Black Caucus will continue to fight to ensure fair and just representation in Louisiana as we focus on the instruments remaining in this redistricting session. Representative

Wilford Carter's HB 18 and HB 20 both work to expand minority representation in the Louisiana Supreme Court and will be heard on the House Floor soon—where we expect and demand a robust debate and vote.

LLBC Chairman Vincent Pierre added, "The people of Louisiana want and deserve representation that is fair, just, courageous, and honorable and that is exactly what they should get."

MARDI GRAS from page 1

Dr. Dan Godbee said. "I think it will still be a concern but not as big as a concern as the public safety is."

Public safety is ensuring

parade-goers stay safe while at the parades.

Both doctors said if you are going to a parade, get vaccinated or boosted if you have not done so. Social distance when you can and mask when you cannot.

Louisiana Army National Guard's 1st Black woman pilot

PINEVILLE, La. — In 2005, Warrant Officer Tatiana Julien and her family had to shelter at the Superdome after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans. A CH-47 Chinook helicopter later rescued them from the stadium after they spent a week there.

And just like how they were evacuated over a decade ago, Julien might find herself coming to the aid of people who may be similarly stranded after she recently became the Louisiana Army National Guard's first Black female pilot, the Associated Press reported.

"I feel like I now have a responsibility to let young females know that aviation is an option for them even though it is a male-dominated field," Julien said in a press release last Thursday. "There aren't many women, and even fewer Black women in aviation, both in the military and on the civilian side."

She also said she was unaware she'll be making history when she underwent training. "It feels surreal," she said.

Julien said a Black New Orleans pilot who was in her unit during a deployment to the Middle East from 2017 to 2018 inspired her to become a pilot. She said she noticed the officer, now Chief Warrant Officer 4 Troy Willis, was the only Black person serving as a Warrant officer pilot in her unit, WDSU reported. She added that seeing her fellow New Orleans native in the cockpit inspired her to also become one.

"I told Mr. Willis about my decision to become a pilot, and with no hesitation he said that he will mentor me," she recalled. "He helped with putting my flight packet together, was there through all of my hardships during flight school, and he gave guidance when it was needed. Mr. Willis definitely had an impact on the start of my aviation career, and I thank him for that."

"I am extremely proud of Ju-



Tatiana Julien is the Louisiana Army National Guard's first Black female pilot -- Photo Credit: Louisiana National Guard via AP

lien. Her level of intelligence and her inquisitiveness really stands out, making her a perfect candidate to become a pilot, and I believe that diversity of our armed forces is what makes us strong," Willis also said in the statement.

Julien enlisted at the Warrant Officer Candidate School in 2014. The female officer, who had an associate degree at the time, eventually graduated in 2019 and then finished flight school in July last year, per the Associated Press. Having also graduated from the University

of New Orleans with a bachelor's degree in psychology, Julien said she wants to further earn a master's degree in either counseling education or human resources.

In a bid to inspire other students of her color, one of Julien's mentors, Retired Sgt. 1st Class Haywood Harrison, said he has been making her talk to his Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps. Julien also said she wishes to similarly have a talk with students at her former school, George Washington Carver High School.

"I feel like the exposure just isn't there for many young Black kids in the community I grew up in. A lot of us don't know about opportunities like this," Julien said.

And though Julien is yet to partake in an emergency response mission, she has firsthand knowledge of the significance of her job as a warrant officer. "Hope, security and relief were all that I felt in that moment," she said in reference to their 2005 helicopter rescue. "I am now in a position where I may have to do the same for someone else."

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Organizations, community teaming up in an effort to get drug dealers off streets



City officials and community leaders met to discuss drug overdose deaths in Baton Rouge Thursday, February 17.

BATON ROUGE, La. — Several local organizations, community partners, and law enforcement members are teaming up with the hopes that a new initiative will encourage members of the community

to come forward and turn in known drug dealers, to combat overdose deaths in Baton Rouge.

The 'One Call, Save Many Community Overdose Prevention Initiative Fund' is a community-

funded effort to allocate money to Crime Stoppers as a reward for individuals who provide information leading to an arrest of an opiate/opioid dealer, according to organizers.

Bill from page 1

they intend to end the special session before the weekend, although they technically have until 6 p.m. Sunday to conclude.

Hewitt's bill would ordinarily "lay over" a full day before the full House could take a vote on it, but it's been given a waiver so that it could be considered as soon as Thursday. The same exception hasn't been made for Carter's bills.

Rep. Mark Wright, R-Covington, offered a motion to table Ivey's bill in the middle of debate over his map. It effectively killed the proposal without lawmakers having to officially go on the record as voting for or against it.

After the 53-42 vote to table his

bill, Ivey rebuke his colleagues for not heeding the input many received during a statewide round of redistricting hearings ahead of the session.

"When groups of people in our state do not vote because they feel that their vote doesn't count... what do we say? We're saying we haven't evolved at all," he said.

Ivey said he doesn't intend to propose any bills in the upcoming regular session — maybe not next year either — and will instead work with other lawmakers to support their causes.

"Because being principled, trying to be consistent isn't necessarily politically expedient," Ivey said.

Without naming specific lawmakers, Ivey called the Legislature "the laziest group of people I've ever worked with" and that members pri-

oritize "playing politics" over the livelihoods of Louisiana residents.

"Last year, what you'll find is if (a bill) wasn't backed by the pockets of corporate special interests, it didn't have much of a shot," Ivey said.

The Legislature can adjourn without approving a new state Supreme Court map because the law doesn't compel them to draw new districts. The last time they were updated was 1997, and only then because a federal court forced the state's hand.

Lawmakers could make another attempt to fashion court districts during the regular session, but it would be one of several heavy lifts — along with the state budget and construction spending plan — on the agenda.

Health from page 1

and gatherings, people should be aware that the CDC recommends that in communities with high transmission rates, currently all 64 of our parishes, people wear masks in public in crowds, especially in-

doors," Gov. Edwards said. "If you got your booster dose today, you could have supercharged immunity by Mardi Gras."

While masks are not required statewide in Louisiana, there are still federal regulations requiring them in health care settings and on transit. In addition, local governments,

school districts and businesses may choose to require masks as they see fit, based on the level of COVID in their communities.

The Governor's current order expires on March 16, 2022, though he may end it before that date. The original COVID public health emergency was signed on March 11, 2020

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

RELIGION

You Have Options



By JEROME SMITH, SR.
Brand New Life Christian Center

You may choose based on your taste, or what best suits your options are always before us, but we must choose!

When going into Walmart and going down the cereal aisle, there are many options. Diet, but the problem isn't that we have options it's the option we choose.

"Today, I have given you a choice between Life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose Life, so that you and your descendants might live!" Deuteronomy 30:19 NLT

God created men with the ability to choose, and we are like him. The Bible says it like this, HE (God) cre-

ated man in his image and likeness; this speaks to our identity as well as the capabilities and authorities that God has given to his prize creation. He provides the ability to choose mankind, not just male kind, and there is equality in the spirit.

It's important that we understand the power of choices; the rest of creation lives by nature.

Being led by the spirit proves that we are sons of God; we're in his image.

What does being led by the spirit mean? When we rely on the Holy Spirit, it proves that we are put-



Pastor Jerome Smith, Sr.

ting our faith in God and that God knows what's best for the kingdom. For example, God doesn't choose your spouse for you; he leaves that up to you. He gives the guidelines that make the relationship work and reflect the Kingdom of God.

Are you chosen based on the outward appearance only? Outward appearance may play a part but shouldn't be a priority. Knowing God should set the tone for the choices we make.

"The steps of a [good and righteous] man are directed and established by the Lord, And He delights in his way [and blesses his path]." Psalms 37:23 AMP

"Now, there were four men with leprosy sitting at the entrance of the city gates. "Why should we sit here waiting to die?" they asked each other. "We will starve if we stay here, but with the famine in the city, we will

starve if we go back there. So we might as well go out and surrender to the Aramean army. If they let us live, so much the better. But if they kill us, we would have died anyway." 2 Kings 7:3-4 NLT

These leprosy were between a rock and a hard place; the only options they had were to be an outcast or make a change and enter the enemy camp in hopes that they would not kill them.

They were rejected by friends, family, church government, etc...

God says, "You are accepted in the beloved"! Ephesians 1:5-6 KJV Don't set in pain, hurt, pity, despair, depression, or un-forgiveness; walk out. God knows the plan he has for you; it's good, not evil, to give you a future and the desired end.

His provision awaits you, so Choose Life!!



PROMISE KEEPER

BY GAYLE YOUNG

It's still 2022, your healing miracle is here! We are praying for your success, prosperity, and your health.

Again, this month we are going to dive into heart health, discuss some foods that were created to heal your cardiomyopathy, high blood pressure, and congestive heart failure. If you want to know specifically the foods you need to eat for heart health, call me for a complimentary session to do a deep dive just for you.

Let's discuss our third scripture on healing for the year. Again, we are following Keith Moore's, "101 Things God Said About Healing." Genesis the fifteenth chapter begins with God's promises to Abram. We see God's word being delivered to Abram in a vision. God is giving him a continued commitment: Don't be afraid. I am your shield. God is promising him a great reward.

As we know Abram died at the ripe old age of 175. Who do you know in your family that has lived to 175 in our modern times? The research mentions the oldest to live, besides Abram, was Jeanne Louise Calment of France who lived to be 122 years and 164 days. Many contribute her age to her wit and her tranquil personality.

What about Adam? He lived to 930. When I think about the length of time that Adam lived, my reflection is that sin and disobedience carry a penalty. But that is not all - adherence to God's original plant diet sustains the body. Ignoring God's original plant diet as the diet he left for us, creates disease.

God, the promise keeper, gave the first man instruction regarding food and diet. It was a

plant diet, not plant-based. It was just plants: fruit, vegetables, legumes, seeds, whole grains, and nuts. Not meat, no refined foods, no sugars, just plants. This is the healing diet, soul preserving, emotional elevation, restful sleep, disease-free way of nourishing our temple.

Genesis 15:15 reads, "Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age." Living our lives peacefully and dying in peace is attainable for us all. Many foods we eat affect our emotional balance, thought processes, wealth, and health.

I was so reminded how God keeps his peace and age promises this week. I am cooking healthy meals for my mom and visiting her every 2 days. In her home, there are prayer request journals that she has kept through the years to record her prayers and God's answers to them.

She asked him for long life, He has done that. She writes about keeping her mind healed, she is 83 and He has done that. And, she has through the years asked for peace and he has done that. She has a merry heart, that has been medicine to her soul. She sleeps well, can learn, and pay attention. She's blessed. I'm grateful to God the promise keeper. His diet Heals: try it and Him.

Call me for your complimentary Heart Health appointment. Dr. Gayle Young, HHP, MA, JD, gayle@laughterinyourbelly.com, 225-443-9355.



Dr. Gayle Young

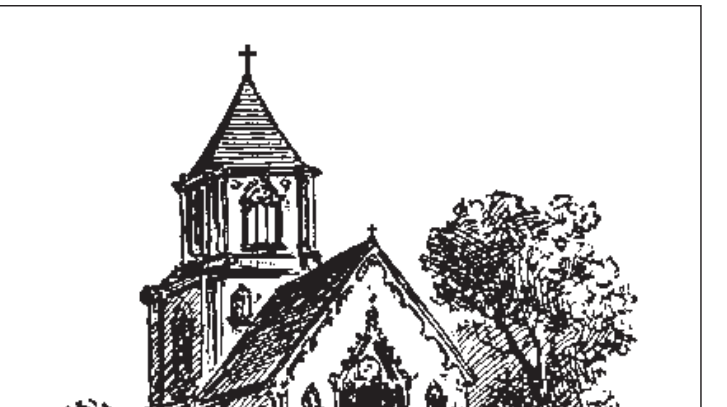
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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Bible Study Wednesday	7:00pm
Sister/Brotherhood Meeting	6:00pm

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Contemporary Worship	2nd & 5th Sunday 8:00 a.m. (And any Sunday that falls on a Holiday)
Bible Study	Wednesday, Men's Mid-Day Study 12:00 p.m.
Disciple Bible Study	Wednesday 5:30 p.m.
Prayer Ministry	Tuesday 6:00 p.m.

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Lord's 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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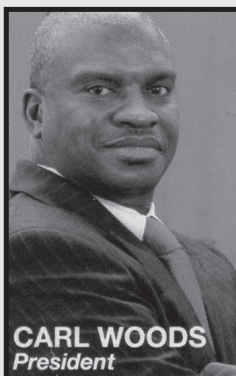


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BUSINESS

Congress Passes \$57 Billion Postal Reform Bill



The legislation would clear \$57 billion of that amount and save the agency another \$50 billion over the next decade.

BY STACY M. BROWN
NNPA Newswire
Senior National Correspondent

Congress has passed the Postal Service Reform Act of 2021, bipartisan legislation lawmakers said would help the U.S. Postal Service save money, balance its budget, and improve service.

The measure, which passed by a margin of 342-92, is seen by many as a critical reform that would repeal the pre-funding mandate—a rule passed in 2006 which gutted the Postal Service's financial independence.

Reportedly, decades of falling mail use have turned the Postal Service into a "perpetual financial loser," and the pre-funding requirement has accounted for \$152.8 billion of its \$206.4 billion in liabilities.

The legislation would clear \$57 billion of that amount and save the agency another \$50 billion over the next decade.

Importantly, lawmakers said the bill would help to modernize the Postal Service, ensure faster and more dependable deliveries, increase oversight and accountability, protect rural newspapers, and ensure the stability of this critical American institution.

"The U.S. Postal Service didn't care that my grandmother was a Black woman who didn't have much and lived in a rural area," Florida Democratic Rep. Val Demings stated.

"They never failed to deliver. The U.S. Postal service is the oldest, most reliable, most trusted in-

stitution in this country. Countless Americans, including 90 percent of veterans, get their medicine through the mail," Rep. Demings continued.

"Millions of Americans rely on the Postal Service to correspond, to operate their small businesses, and to vote. The U.S. Postal Service is fundamentally American, and I am proud to vote today to protect this exceptional public service and save our post offices."

Rep. Demings noted that the bill would require future Postal Service retirees, who have been paying into Medicare their entire careers, enrolling in Medicare.

Currently, roughly a quarter of postal retirees do not enroll in Medicare even though they are eligible.

"This means the Postal Service is stuck paying far higher premiums than any other public or private sector employer," Rep. Demings remarked.

The Postal Service estimates it could save approximately \$22.6 billion over ten years by closely integrating Medicare.

The bill also eliminates the requirement that the Postal Service pre-fund retiree health benefits for all current and retired employees for 75 years in the future.

"No private company or other federal government entity is required to comply with such a burdensome requirement," Rep. Demings declared.

The Postal Service estimates this provision would drastically reduce its pre-funding liability and allow it to save roughly \$27 billion over ten years.

Additionally, the legislation requires the Postal Service to develop a public-facing, online dashboard with national and local level service performance data updated each week to provide additional transparency and promote compliance with on-time delivery of mail.

The measure also requires the Postal Service to deliver mail and packages at least six days per week across an integrated network.

It allows postal officials to enter into agreements with state, local, and tribal governments to provide non-commercial property and services that enhance value, does not detract from core postal services, and provide a reasonable contribution to Postal Service institutional costs.

Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.), who has sponsored the Senate version of the bill and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee chair, said his chamber would move quickly on the legislation.

"I have worked hand in hand with the bipartisan leaders of my committee and the House Oversight and Reform Committee to craft this bipartisan bill," Peters said in a statement.

"[The bill] will help the Postal Service overcome unfair and burdensome financial requirements, provide more transparency and accountability to the American people, and continue its nearly 250-year tradition of service to every community in our nation," Peters said.

BREC Begins Summer Camp Registration

BATON ROUGE – BREC offers online summer camp registration for East Baton Rouge Parish residents beginning Saturday, March 5 at 9 a.m. and on Tuesday, March 15 during regular facility hours of operation for out-of-parish residents. Parents or guardians may register in person at the facility of their choice or online at webtrac.brec.org for all locations. All summer camp sessions can be reserved online by East Baton Rouge Parish residents with a 50% payment of total session fees. Summer camp balances are due by April 29. Beginning April 30, full payments of summer camp sessions are required at the time of registration.

Give your child the opportunity to experience Camp BREC, at any of our Community Recreation summer camps at various locations throughout the parish for children ages 4-5 and 6-12. These camp opportunities are created to provide campers with an enjoyable camp experience full of exciting activities and unique field trips. Each of our camps is an inclusive atmosphere that encourages developing friendships and social skills. New this year, Community Recreation is excited to offer specialty camps with a wider variety of activities tailored to the specific interests of our campers. We have developed eight weeks that will concentrate on adding fun and variety to the summer with expert guests/instructors, field trips, crafts and activities that support that week's specialty.

This summer, BREC will also offer athletic summer camps through our summer sports camp and tennis camp programs. In addition to the community recreation specialty camps, we will also offer special interest summer camps at the Baton Rouge Zoo, Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, Farr Park Equestrian Center, Highland Road Park Observatory, Independence Park Theatre, Magnolia Mound, Perkins Road Extreme Sports Park, BREC Art Camp at Milton J. Womack Park and Zachary Community Park. Outdoor Adventure Camp at Greenwood Community Park and BREC's Nature Explorers Conservation Camp at Palomino Drive Park.

For our teenagers, BREC will also offer Teen Get Out for ages 12-15. This camp will allow teens to learn about and explore new recreation and leisure opportunities while impacting their community. Daily themed activities will include music, teambuilding, cooking, health and wellness, fitness activities and career exploration with hands-on experience.

Camper Assessments are made of all campers that have a disability regardless of the camp desired. Trained BREC staff will assess each camper's needs and ability level, in order to provide the most meaningful camp experience for each camper. Recreation assessments are performed in order to determine the appropriate camp setting for each camper. To schedule an appointment for an assessment call 225-272-9200 ext 1561 or email Blaine Imhoff at blaine.imhoff@brec.org or Molly Orr at molly.orr@brec.org.

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Louisiana to Receive Approximately \$75 Million for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Louisiana is set to receive approximately \$75 million over the next five years for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, with \$14.1 million allocated this fiscal year. This is part of President Biden's bipartisan infrastructure law to deploy chargers along highways and in rural areas to support domestic manufacturing jobs and make EVs more accessible and affordable for working families. Under guidelines set by the Federal Highway Administration, federal funds require a minimum 20 percent state match. In order to bridge this funding gap, DOTD will be developing an EV charging infrastructure deployment grant program and an alternative fuel vehicle infrastructure grant program

if there is sufficient interest from the private sector in hydrogen, natural gas, additional EV or propane fueling infrastructure.

"This investment is a step in the right direction to help Louisiana achieve its climate goals of becoming net zero by 2050, and I am thankful to Sen. Bill Cassidy and Congressman Troy Carter for their work in making this a reality," said Gov. John Bel Edwards. "We have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit the impacts of climate change, which harms the state's natural resources. One of the biggest changes in a low-carbon future will be seen in the way we travel. By making electric vehicles affordable to the daily commuter, and having the infrastructure to



accommodate this, Louisiana can transition to using more renewable energy sources. These changes won't

come overnight, but this investment will help us in our efforts to reach these goals."

"We aim to have Louisiana become a competitor in EVs, and in doing so want to convert the ap-

propriate allocation of "gas" station assets into "fuel" stations where a wide variety of fuels are available, electricity for recharging EV batteries being one of them," said DOTD Secretary Shawn D. Wilson. "Once again, I'd like to thank Sen. Bill Cassidy and Congressman Troy Carter for their support of the IIJA bipartisan bill which will help the state move infrastructure projects forward."

DOTD will begin to develop the grant programs and aims to solicit applications over the next year. In the second year, the department will make awards, monitor and inspect installations, and identify and correct weaknesses in the grant programs for use in future rounds of solicitations and awards.

Baton Rouge local businesses partner to host African American Book Festival 'Children First'

BATON ROUGE, La. — In Celebration of Black History Month, Jasper, LLC and community partners Andrews Allstate Insurance, In Loving Arms Pediatric Day Care

Center, Lacy Baaheth & Associates Real Estate, and The Baton Rouge Weekly Press are hosting an African American Book Festival "Children First" which will culminate on Mon-

day, February 28, 2022. Donations of Preschool Age Books including coloring and interactive books are needed. All books collected will be placed with local EBRP Head Start

Centers. Please consider being a Donors, Sponsors, and/or Drop-Off Site. Current Drop-Off Sites are Andrews Allstate Insurance, In Loving Arms Pediatric Day Care Center, Lacy

Baaheth & Associates Real Estate and The Baton Rouge Weekly Press. For additional information, please contact Gloria Whiten @ 225-955-4853 or email at missgloria1986@yahoo.com.



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START DATE:
02.07.2022

END DATE:
02.28.2022

BLACK HISTORY 2022

WE HAVE THE TOOLS TO FIGHT OMICRON

As the Omicron variant continues to spread, we must remember that we have more tools than ever to slow the spread of COVID-19.

If you are not yet vaccinated, you are unprotected. Vaccines protect you against severe outcomes from COVID-19, like hospitalization and death. According to data from the CDC, unvaccinated people are 10 times more likely to be infected and 20 times more likely to die due to COVID compared to a fully vaccinated person with a booster shot.

- ✓ **Get vaccinated** and, if eligible, get boosted.
- ✓ **Wear a mask** in all public indoor settings, all indoor private spaces with people who are not in your immediate household, and outdoors when not able to social distance.
- ✓ **Limit exposure** to those outside your household.
- ✓ Practice **social distancing**.
- ✓ **Stay home** if you are not feeling well.
- ✓ **Wash your hands** with soap and water.
- ✓ **Get tested** if you're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or if you have been recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.

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