



GET LOUISIANA WORKING

Introduction

Because of the threat of COVID-19 and the economic shutdown implemented to address it, **hundreds of thousands of Louisianans are newly-unemployed**. This means families across the state are left wondering how they'll pay rent, put food on the table, or even meet the demands of kids and daily life. Add to that a true crisis in our oil and gas industry, and the outcome is disastrous.

Our state's economy wasn't rosy before these crises. With among the highest levels of unemployment in the country and a stagnant economy before the pandemic hit our shores, Louisianans from every walk of life have been suffering for too long—and now we've reached a true crisis point.

Without taking bold action today to unleash job creation and clear away barriers to opportunity, real recovery will be out of reach for too many families. Jobs and opportunity will leave Louisiana even more quickly than before, and we'll be left with a state that is genuinely a shell of its former self. This isn't hyperbole. This is reality, and the time to act is now. As they say, doing the same things over and over while expecting different results is the definition of insanity, and families across the state are counting on our leaders to Get Louisiana Working.

The following is a breakdown of policy solutions to address the key problems currently stifling Louisiana's chance at a strong recovery.

SIMPLIFY THE TAX CODE

There is no more important time than now to pursue reforms that simplify our complicated, antiquated tax code. Just fixing the structure of our corporate and personal income tax codes would result in a roughly four percent growth in GDP and add at least 15,000 jobs. Relieving individuals and businesses from a complicated and burdensome tax code would reduce headache, while also freeing up time for entrepreneurs and small businesses to focus on creating jobs and boosting the economy.

Revenue-neutral solutions to simplify the tax code and create jobs

- Simplify personal income tax rates to a 4% flat tax and remove a myriad of deductions and credits.
- Simplify and flatten the corporate income tax rate down to about 3% by repealing the corporate deduction for federal taxes paid and various targeted incentive programs included in the corporate tax code. Use revenue triggers to phase out the corporate rate.
- Repeal the corporate franchise tax.
- Repeal the refundable credit and phase out parishes' authority to assess inventory taxes, which represent an ineffective way for parishes to raise revenue.
- Centralize sales tax collections to simplify the process.
- Lower, eliminate, or redirect the Severance Tax on oil and gas industry companies to provide relief during the current oil price decline and COVID-19 crisis.



REIN IN STATE SPENDING

Louisiana families are meeting at kitchen tables every night trying to figure out how to make ends meet in a troubled economy, and they have very few answers. As the state budget has lurched from shortfall to shortfall, while also managing to increase by \$2 billion in the last five years, lawmakers have repeatedly addressed this problem by sending a bill to the taxpayers. Instead of making those kitchen-table conversations even more difficult, we must ensure the state government's spending lives within its means. Spending must be limited, so it does not exceed revenue and economic projections. We also must avoid the same mistakes of the past by putting mechanisms in place to avoid the misuse of the new, large influx in federal funding.

Solutions to rein in spending

- Establish an effective spending limit to ensure state government lives within its means.
- Restrict the state budget to 98% of the Revenue Estimating Conference's revenue projection.
- End the arbitrary "silos" for non-reviewed government spending — re-examine those in the state Constitution and end those created through statutory dedications.



END LAWSUIT ABUSE

Even before the crisis, families were feeling the hurt of lawsuit abuse: sky-high insurance rates, job losses, and the departure of friends and families to states with more abundant job opportunities. Turning this around requires addressing our broken legal system now. The costs of the abuse running rampant in our current system are felt by everyone in the state. Perhaps among the hardest hit by lawsuit abuse are workers in the oil and gas industry, who are now faced with even stronger headwinds in the form of free-falling oil prices.

Solutions to end lawsuit abuse against Louisianans

- Give citizens greater access to jury trials by eliminating Louisiana's \$50,000 barrier for obtaining a jury trial in civil cases.
- Address the gag order on evidence not being allowed regarding compensation resulting in double recovery.
- Remove the seat belt "gag order," which currently disallows juries from knowing whether or not vehicle accident claimants were wearing a seatbelt at the time of their accident.
- Stop the practice of allowing direct action against insurers.
- Strengthen Louisiana's venue laws to preclude lawyers from unreasonable forum shopping in state courts.
- End the state-sanctioned Coastal Lawsuits against Louisiana's largest job creators.
- Examine current Legacy Lawsuit practices to eliminate frivolous and abusive litigation.



MODERNIZE STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure like our state's roads and bridges has an impact on everyone's quality of life and our ability to attract new jobs and industries to the state. Louisiana can and must prioritize infrastructure spending without raising taxes. Making infrastructure a priority would send a strong signal that Louisiana is serious about attracting new jobs.

Solutions to modernize infrastructure

- Reform the way the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) is funded and how expenditures are prioritized.
- Work more closely with the federal government to spend federal money on federal infrastructure.
- Enter into more public-private partnerships (P3s) to stretch limited public funds further and improve transportation infrastructure.
- Right-size the number of highway miles falling under the state's responsibility by empowering local authority.



MAKE LOUISIANA A TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION HUB

This pandemic has made it clear that Louisiana is in dire need of technological advances, especially in the realm of connectivity. Our state should be doing everything possible to ensure internet services has a light touch of regulation, few fees, and minimal government involvement. Louisiana has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to roll out the welcome mat and be a hub for innovators and entrepreneurs. The policies lawmakers consider today will have a significant impact on job creators, working families, students, and everyone in between. We need action to expand broadband access, expand the gig economy, and attract new jobs and innovators.

Solutions for connectivity

- Lower costs for crossing state infrastructure to install broadband devices.
- Cap all fees and application times on small cell deployment across the state.
- Allow electric co-ops to provide broadband service and open electric co-op infrastructure for Internet service providers.
- Allow for the deployment of broadband equipment around or through Louisiana railways.
- Encourage Louisiana internet service providers to take part in the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) rural digital opportunity fund program.
- Develop state inventory of all infrastructure for deployment of fiber and/or wireless connectivity and passage of the "dig once" policy.



CUT RED TAPE AND GROW JOBS

Lawmakers often underestimate the real impact proposed regulations could have on small businesses, entrepreneurs, and the overall state economy. Louisiana's burdensome regulations and state government overreach hinders our ability to create quality jobs for Louisiana families. If we want to recover from this current crisis and stop the departure of jobs and opportunity from our state, we need lawmakers to act now on regulatory reform. With the right reforms in place, we can make the process fairer and more transparent, while also limiting strict government oversight.

Solutions to knock down barriers to work

- Recognize the out-of-state occupational licenses of those coming to work in Louisiana, a process that was implemented during the COVID-19 crisis and should be extended.
- Eliminate occupational licenses (requirements and fees) for jobs that do not require a license in most other states.

Solutions to cut red tape for small businesses

- Keep those regulations lifted during the crisis in place (i.e., telemedicine and scope of practice).
- Adopt an "economic analysis unit" or a board to provide independent, evidence-based impact statements on the costs and benefits of proposed regulations.
- Enact a systematic process to review and eliminate unnecessary and/or outdated regulations that provide no public benefit.
- Establish a transparent electronic process for regulations to make it easier for small business owners and to provide agencies with better engagement.



ENSURE RETURNED CITIZENS ARE RE-ENTRY READY

Recently incarcerated citizens want an opportunity to succeed and contribute to society upon returning to their communities. Easing their burden to get back to work would send a signal that the state is serious about being competitive and attractive to the business community, as well as offer additional workforce options to employers. The best antidote to the destructive cycle of recidivism is to help returning citizens find a quality job.

Solutions to help returning citizens find jobs

- Make re-entry to society easier by integrating technology for checking in on probation and parole.
- Integrate certifications for ex-offenders onto one form of identification for ease.



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