

Sponsor: Dustee Matthews
Club: Neville High School
House Bill 2

AN ACT

TO: Government Housing Assistance

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

Crimes committed, regardless of severity, have collateral consequences that more often than not are severe, unexpected, and long-lasting. According to the Louisiana Coalition of Justice, "In Louisiana, every person convicted of a misdemeanor, and their household may be evicted or become permanently ineligible for government housing assistance. They may also be permanently excluded from visiting a friend or family member who lives in public housing." Due to the severity of this punishment, it leaves an estimated 120,000 citizens throughout Louisiana, at any given time, no place to live in times of need. Once out of jail and fines have been paid, a citizen should not continue to be denied sustainable shelter due to an action that, by definition, is a "non-indictable offense." According to Huffington Post, "Louisiana is the incarceration capital of the world." In turn, the state is also the re-entry capital of the world - a role Louisiana is clearly ill-prepared to handle. The state must protect the rights of those who continue to suffer bad consequences for their wrongdoings by making government housing assistance a source of shelter for those seeking to regain stability.

SECTION II

This bill will be enacted on January 1st, 2018. The Louisiana Department of Housing and Urban Development will allow those convicted of a misdemeanor to obtain government housing assistance. Misdemeanor status will no longer be a deciding factor when reviewing applications for government housing assistance. This will exclude battery, arson, and other violent misdemeanors. Allow those convicted of up to three misdemeanors to obtain government housing assistance.

SECTION III

There is no funding necessary for this bill. A budget expansion is not needed due to security of consistent grants given directly to the state of Louisiana to ensure the improvement of the social welfare of Americans.

SECTION IV

If an employee in the Louisiana Department of Housing and Urban Development is found turning down applications due to misdemeanor offenses, the employee will first be issued a warning and then will be reprimanded accordingly. Regarding occupants living in government housing, the occupant will be obligated to abide by the regulations and penalties set by the overseer.

SECTION V

If any provision of the Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid the invalidity does not affect the other provisions or applications of the Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the Act are severable.

SECTION VI

All laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed

President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Ben Scott
Co-Sponsor: Ben Shallenberger
Club: Mandeville High School
House Bill 20

AN ACT

TO: Clean Power and Brain Power is Unlimited Power

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

Money and education are two issues that have continually plagued Louisiana. With the oil industry slowly leaving, soon enough Louisiana will lose its foothold in the oil industry, which provides substantial income for the state. The price of oil is always fluctuating, which often leaves Louisiana reliant on high oil prices. Additionally, now more than ever, STEM college graduates are leaving the state in substantially high numbers. We plan to provide incentives to clean energy companies and clean energy tech start-ups that will run and operate in Louisiana in order to provide a more stable income. Major energy companies will be allowed to and encouraged to build renewable/clean energy plants. Incentives will include a tax rebates/credits of upwards of 30% on the cost of producing megawatts (MW) per hour. For example, a nuclear reactor can produce 500 MW per hour, which, at \$92 production cost per MW, will total to be \$46,000. Start-ups will also face tax rebates on the cost of Research and Development (R&D). Clean energy can deal with resources such as solar, nuclear, wind, and water. The costs of plant construction will also receive similar and fairly hefty tax rebates. With these plants and technology being developed, Louisiana will become the center of the clean and renewable energy industry. With the industry, more specialists and highly skilled jobs will come to Louisiana and will decrease the number of college graduates who leave the state.

SECTION II

Tax rebates will begin to apply on Jan 1, 2018. If a company wants to build a plant of any kind, they will be allotted plots of land approved by the state government. We will incentivise companies to base themselves more in middle to northern Louisiana, so that economic prosperity will become more widespread and not just centralized in the Southeast, where the oil industry is already well established. The geography and topography of the middle to northern region is also ideal for wind and solar energy plants. With the approval, companies will be permitted to build renewable/clean energy plants, such as solar or nuclear plants. These plants will have to be employed by a majority of Louisiana natives in order to spur local economies and to compensate for the incentives that are given to the companies.

SECTION III

Funding may be required in some cases but will be limited because the state is providing incentives to companies who will pay for and oversee the construction for the plants. In case funding is necessary, funds will be drawn from the Department of Economic Development.

SECTION IV

Any company or business that doesn't adhere to building codes, employment requirement, abuses the incentive system, or incorrect disposal of potential waste will have their tax breaks revoked. They will also have to pay a fine of \$500,000. Companies that own nuclear power plants and don't dispose of their waste properly will be fined \$10 million and possibly more charges. They will face federal charges in egregious cases.

SECTION V

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SECTION VI

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President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Kayla Martinez
Co-Sponsor: Chris D'Angelo
Club: Mandeville High School
House Bill 23

AN ACT

TO: Implement Gender Neutral Bathrooms in Government-Owned Facilities

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

Violence rates against transgender citizens are consistently above the national average. Discrimination based on gender identity is dealt with by transgender Americans nearly every day. This bill intends to repurpose all handicapped bathrooms in government-owned public facilities so that they are accessible to both handicapped and gender-neutral people as a compromise to improve the quality of lives of citizens identifying as a gender that they do not match biologically. According to the New York Times, approximately 1.4 million adults in America identify as transgender. However, that estimate continues to increase as more and more people feel comfortable voicing their identities. 46% of Americans, according to The Pew Research Center, believe transgender people should be required to use restroom facilities matching their birth certificates. Alternatively, 51% feel transgender individuals should be able to utilize the restroom of their choice. With strong proponents and opponents regarding transgender bathroom rights, the state government should take the first step towards compromise by allowing transgender citizens to access handicapped bathrooms.

SECTION II

Government-owned facilities will add a gender-neutral bathroom sign next to the one indicating handicapped people can utilize it; no other changes are required as this is merely policy. In addition to handicapped single user restrooms in public places, any and all single user restrooms in public places will become gender neutral.

SECTION III

The only change required is the addition of a gender-neutral restroom sign costing \$15.95 for each restroom. This payment will be taken out of each building's budget and is a one-time payment.

SECTION IV

Facilities who chose not to implement the bathrooms will lose 7% of their state funding. This bill only applies to facilities that already have separate handicapped or family restrooms.

SECTION V

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SECTION VI

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President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Camryn Anderson
Co-Sponsor: Claire DiCorte
Club: Mandeville High School
House Bill 24

AN ACT

TO: Bucks for Bees: To Incentivize Farmers to Invest in Beehives/Apiaries for Tax Credit

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

In our state, and many states across the nation, there is a growing crisis, and that is the current decline of commercial bee populations and other pollinators. The decline has been linked to stressors such as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), the invasive varroa mite (*V. destructor*), the use of neonicotinoids and other pesticides, as well as invasive diseases. Loss of foraging lands have also been a large contributor. Bees are crucial to the growing process for crops, and without them, farming practices in Louisiana would have to change. There has been a growing industry of traveling apiaries that farmers are able to rent during the pollinating season if the local populations of bees is not enough. However, renting such hives has become increasingly expensive as the demand grows, with a single hive costing \$160-\$200. This may not seem like much, but when taken into account that multiple hives are needed per acre, farmers can end up paying thousands of dollar every season. However, if farmers owned their own beehives, also known as apiaries, such costs would be lessened.

SECTION II

In order to promote farmers to invest in their own apiaries, the state of Louisiana would allow farmers to deduct the cost of their hives from their annual state taxes. The application fee for an apiary permit would be waived as well. Farmers would be required to produce receipts from all transactions related to their hives, such as materials required to build hives, equipment, and the bee colonies as well. Only a certain amount of tax credits will be issued to each parish based on agricultural need and pollinator population size, and each parish will need to be assessed individually. Tax credits will no longer be issued after ten years from program start date. Farmers who have invested in apiaries within the last two years can also apply for the program as long as they have suitable documentation of their purchases. Farmers will also be obligated to donate portions of their hives (when at a stable population size) to research programs facilitated through the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and local universities such as the Louisiana Pollinator Cooperative Conservation Program (LPCCP) facilitated by Louisiana State University. These programs would work in tandem with the Presidential Memorandum issued by President Obama in 2015 of Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators.

SECTION III

The bill requires no financing as it will be deducted from the farmers' taxes.

SECTION IV

Use of neonicotinoid pesticides or misuse of funds would result in a fine or ineligibility for this program. Farmers must comply with local pesticide application timing and failed inspections will result in ineligibility for this program.

SECTION V

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SECTION VI

All laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed

President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Lydia Rewerts
Co-Sponsor: Lindsey Liccardi
Club: Mandeville High School
House Bill 25

AN ACT

TO: Instate a Work Program for Criminals with Minor Offenses

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

Each year, approximately 18,000 offenders are released from state prisons and jails to communities across Louisiana. Within five years, 43% of them will wind up back in jail. Louisiana has the highest rate of prisoners per 100,000 adults as well as the highest percentage of prisoners incarcerated for non-violent, drug-related crimes in the United States. This bill proposes to counter these numbers by instating two types of prison work programs offered in correctional facilities: Traditional Industries (TI) and Prison Industry Enhancement (PIE). By instating these programs in which criminals with minor, nonviolent offenses, such as marijuana possession, can work off their punishment through working jobs within their community, we hope to end recidivism. The offenders would be reintegrated into their communities and given the chance to earn both a salary and work experience rather than being incarcerated for excessive amounts of time. These criminals will spend their nights at jail, but they would work regular hours for five to six days a week in their specified job. The workers' will receive 40% of their income and the remaining 60% will be split between helping to finance the program and paying the employers for participation. Through this program, inmates will gain valuable life skills and have a higher chance of becoming productive citizens after their release.

SECTION II

This program will be enacted in each parish individually once a set number of employers agree to hire inmates proportional to the size of their working force. These employers will be encouraged to take on inmate workers with specific business tax exemptions that vary depending on the number of inmates in their employ. The scheduling and transportation of the inmates will be done by a new branch of the local government consisting of 2-3 employees who will operate the program for each parish prison. Provide a tax incentive to employers that rehire/continue employing inmates after release in other jobs in the company/business. Provide supervision of the inmates at the job.

SECTION III

The program will be financed by 30% of the workers' income as well as the funds previously used to incarcerate these inmates.

SECTION IV

Jails will receive a warning, followed by legal action should they fail to instate this program.

SECTION V

If any provision of the Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid the invalidity does not affect the other provisions or applications of the Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the Act are severable.

SECTION VI

All laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed

President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Ainsley Reardon
Co-Sponsor: Megan Butler
Club: Mandeville High
House Bill 26

AN ACT

TO: Provide feminine products such as pads and tampons in correctional centers and homeless shelters.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

Currently, women and young girls in homeless shelters and correctional centers have to pay for their own feminine products. As of now, these hygiene products are considered inessential for women. Certain feminine hygiene products, including, sanitary napkins, tampons, and panty liners are an important part for a female's health. This bill will provide those products for millions of women who are in jail and in homeless shelters. These products are just as necessary as toilet paper and should be just as easily accessible.

SECTION II

More money will be given to these facilities where they will be able to purchase these items and it will be the facility's responsibility to stock them in the bathrooms. Exempt tampons and pads from this luxury tax.

SECTION III

The money from the state budget used to maintain public restrooms, correctional facilities, and shelters' bathrooms will be used to pay for and supply these products just as they supply soap and toilet paper. No money will be necessary to exempt these products from tax.

SECTION IV

The penalty for an individual facility not complying to this legislation \$100 worth of funds will be deducted from the facility's budget. The penalty doubles each month if the facility does not comply.

SECTION V

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SECTION VI

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President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Ryan Ehrlicher
Co-Sponsor: Ryan Rotolo
Club: Mandeville High School
House Bill 28

AN ACT

TO: Reduce Retail Food Waste in Louisiana

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

In the U.S., 40% of all produced food ends up in landfills, costing the nation \$165 billion USD in losses. Of the 133 billion pounds of food wasted, the majority (78%) is lost at the retail and household level. However, food waste isn't just throwing away half an apple--its effects are felt throughout production, transportation, and eventually in landfills. According to Feeding America, 1 in 6 Louisianans struggles with hunger. Agriculture is the "backbone of Louisiana's economy" as its fifth largest economic sector. Two main crops--soybeans and grains--are heavily dependent on nitrate fertilizers for maximum growth, and heavy rains cause runoff into surrounding bodies of water. Louisiana has twenty-four landfills and a dead-zone in the Gulf of Mexico bigger than Connecticut. Although recent efforts to recycle more salvageable waste have been successful, food waste is a largely underestimated and untouched issue--only one major study has been done on food waste in the U.S. since 2000. In stores, fresh produce is disposed of after it surpasses arbitrarily devised "use-by," "best-by," or "expiration" dates (none of which are regulated by the FDA), and what remains of the vast arrays of baked goods at the end of each day is often thrown away. According to corporate grocery waste trackers, reduced waste in stores is seen as a negative indicator, suggesting that a store is not fully stocked and is therefore giving its customers a lesser experience. While some grocery stores have connections with local food banks and may donate food past its "best/use-by" date, many do not seek out these options and are afraid of being held liable for food-related illnesses through donations. However, the 1996 Good Samaritan Food Donation Act limits liability for companies that donate food to non-profits, and the 1976 Tax Act increased tax deductions for those same donor companies. In fact, a company can only be held liable if they donated food in gross negligence--the company must voluntarily and consciously donate with prior knowledge that the product is likely to be harmful to the health or well-being of another person to be held liable for any resulting illnesses. The more that food waste becomes understood, the more pressing of an issue it becomes. We must further combat grocery waste to better provide for those in Louisiana who go hungry.

SECTION II

We propose: 1. To require all grocery stores to either sell fresh produce and baked goods past their "best/use-by" dates in a designated, signed section of the store at half price (where the nature of the products being sold is clear), or partner with a local non-profit food bank or charity to donate the goods the grocery stores no longer want to sell. Meat, poultry, and dairy products are not included in the requirement. 2. To begin yearly evaluations, conducted by the Louisiana Department of Health, of Louisiana's food waste in all sectors starting January 1, 2018. The data collected will allow the state to better understand and combat food waste. Restaurants using food bought past "best/use-by" date must disclose to consumers.

SECTION III

This bill requires no funding. Food banks and charities usually organize the transportation of goods from the grocery store to their location, and there is no transportation cost if a grocery store chooses to sell its own "expired" produce in a different part of the store.

SECTION IV

If during routine inspections a grocery store is not following one or both of the options in Section II, they will be fined 5% of their quarterly net income each quarter until they comply. Grocery stores are inspected by the Retail Food Program of the Louisiana Department of Health. Fines will go towards the non-profit food banks and charities in Louisiana in proportion to the amount of people they serve. For example, a food bank serving all of New Orleans will receive more of the money collected from fines than a small food bank serving 300 people. The fines will also go towards the yearly evaluations of Louisiana's food waste done by the Department of Health.

SECTION V

If any provision of the Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid the invalidity does not affect the other provisions or applications of the Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the Act are severable.

SECTION VI

All laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed

President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Mattie Harrington
Co-Sponsor: Taylor Harrington
Club: C.E. Byrd High School
House Bill 51

AN ACT

TO: Lowering the Percentage of Animals That Have Entered a Shelter and are Euthanized

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

According to a census taken by state-wide animal shelters, there are 130,000 pets that enter a shelter in Louisiana each year. Approximately 92,000 of that number are euthanized (put to sleep). This is because Louisiana shelters are unable to care for the overwhelming amount of unwanted litters, strays, and family pets that enter shelters across our state. The result of this is the euthanizing of healthy, loving cats, kittens, dogs, and puppies that were ready for their forever home or were simply lost and ready to return home. Even with constant reminders on TV, social media platforms, and in magazines, a high pet euthanasia rate remains a constant problem in Louisiana that needs to be reduced by taking action.

SECTION II

The implementation of this bill will begin as soon as it is passed. Once passed, the state will begin the process of establishing permanent low-cost spay and neuter facilities in selected parishes based on population. These facilities will be a part of a program called P.O.P.P, which stands for Pet Overpopulation Prevention Program, and will be able to join forces in a supportive role with spay/neuter facilities that are already present in our state. Similar to Life Share mobile units, the P.O.P.P program will also have mobile spay/neuter units that travel the parishes with lower populations that are unable to access the permanent facilities. These facilities and mobile units will help reduce accidental litters that contribute to pet overpopulation in our communities by offering low-cost, high-quality spay/neuter surgeries. The cost for smaller animals will be between \$35-\$40 and for larger animals it will be between \$45-\$50. Those who have trouble paying the fee to have their pet sterilized will be able to take advantage of financial help and monthly billing options. Local organizations and school organizations would also provide grants for free spaying and neutering for those unable to make any form of payment.

SECTION III

Funding will be from a combination of private donations from individuals as well as grants from the national ASPCA and Humane Society. Matching funds as well as a tax from dog food manufacturers and pet pharmaceutical industries that do business in the state of Louisiana will be set aside to fund the core project.

SECTION IV

There are no penalties for this bill.

SECTION V

If any provision of the Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid the invalidity does not affect the other provisions or applications of the Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the Act are severable.

SECTION VI

All laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed

President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Kyle Beadle
Club: Baton Rouge Magnet High School
House Bill 59

AN ACT

TO: Proportional Penalty Fines

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

Louisiana is the world's prison. Not only does it have more prisoners per capita than any other state, it incarcerates thirteen times more people than China and twenty times more people than Germany. The state spends \$633 million a year to feed, house, and secure our prisoners. Furthermore, Louisiana courts are known for incarcerating people who are simply too poor to pay for fines, especially for nonviolent offenses. From January to February of 2014, eight parishes jailed 372 people for not being able to pay fines or court fees. Furthermore, the practice of incarceration for not paying fines was deemed unconstitutional in the Supreme Court case *Bearden v. Georgia*. Concurrently, the cost of jail time often exceeds the value of the fine, adding a burden to the taxpayers in addition to the burden on the individual. Proportional penalty fines were implemented in New York and Wisconsin in the 1980's and were effective in making the justice system fairer for the impoverished. Debtors prisons are supposed to be a thing of the past, and this bill plans to rid this nation of them once and for all.

SECTION II

All fines doled out for penalties on a state and parish level must be calculated using the offender's income. Instead of giving out monetary penalties on site, computers will calculate the fine using IRS data and a sliding scale. The sliding scale will be created by the Louisiana Department of Justice in collaboration with the Louisiana Departments of Revenue and Public Safety and Corrections. The sliding scale is required to have a maximum penalty for each offense to protect against unjust heavy fines on wealthier individuals.

SECTION III

Funding is not necessary for this bill, as systems are already in place to pay penalty fines. Secondly, the tax information needed for the calculations is already available to government agencies and officials. Proportional fines will increase government revenue and decrease the amount of people incarcerated for not being able to pay fines.

SECTION IV

No penalties are necessary.

SECTION V

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SECTION VI

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President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Derrick Graham
Club: College Track
House Bill 73

AN ACT

TO: Enforce the use of badge cameras by all law enforcement.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

Today in America there is a deep distrust between citizens and police officers, and to bridge that divide body cameras will be enforced. The badge camera is an audio/visual camera where the visual is automatically turned on as soon as the officers clocks in, and they turn on the visual when they report to the incident. The audio component of the camera is time delayed, the officer must hold the button for about 2 seconds to power on audio recording. My bill is to mandate that all police officers wear the new badge cameras. This bill will solve the problem of not only police brutality but brutality against officers in America.

SECTION II

The cameras would be purchased, with the help of a grant, Body-Worn Camera Implementation Program grant by the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. When the cameras arrive to the police station, the officers would turn in their badges so that the cameras could be attached to the badge. The cameras would also be connected to the officers sign in blog so that the camera can be turned on when the officers clock in and turned off when the officers clock out. The audio component will be turned off at the same time the camera is turned off.

SECTION III

Means of financing the cameras and the upkeep/operation of the cameras would come from Body-Worn Camera Implementation Program grant by the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. The reason for the grants would be beneficial to the taxpayers, they would not have to be taxed to fund the cameras. Also independent police monitor's would watch the footage from the police cameras, and because most of them are interns and volunteers they would not receive any added payment.

SECTION IV

If an officer fails to turn on the audio aspect of the camera when answering an incident, the consequences will be: first offense is a warning and re-evaluation of the camera rules, second offense is desk and detail duty and re-evaluation of the camera rules, third offense is six month suspension without pay and re-evaluation of the camera rules, and the fourth offense would be the expulsion from the police force. However, if a citizen is killed unjustly by an officer then they are charged with murder

SECTION V

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SECTION VI

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President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Jacob Zanca
Club: Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies
House Bill 78

AN ACT

TO: Implement Instant-Runoff Elections in All Local, Senatorial, and Gubernatorial Elections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

The greatest issue to ever plague democracy is voter turnout, or lack thereof. Too often, people lack the motivation to go to a polling place and let their voice be a part of the so-called "will of the people." While thinkers and game theorists all have their preferred methods of voting, most of them agree that the current electoral system is among the worst. In the event that the winner of an election does not receive the majority of votes, in the event that a candidate concedes an election before results are tabulated or shortly before they're taken, the current electoral system used by most states has no readily available or fair solution. Issues like these, as well as their nonexistent solutions, are among of the main reasons that voters have lost faith in the electoral system. In cities such as Cambridge, Ma., and St. Paul, MN., as well as in states such as Maine, ranked voting, or "instant-runoff elections" have been implemented. Doing so in Louisiana would eliminate the system of "jungle primaries," or nonpartisan blanket primaries, that sets up not one, but two election days for people to deal with in local and state elections, which already have sickeningly low voter turnouts.

SECTION II

Implement instant-runoff elections in all local, senatorial, and gubernatorial elections by the year 2020, after the next gubernatorial election, providing enough small-scale tests to ensure that the will of the people is accurately represented when, two terms from now, a governor is elected.

SECTION III

Based on information from other states, the estimated funding required for the 2017-2018 fiscal year will be 2.5 million dollars and the estimated funding required for the 2018-2019 fiscal year will be 2.2 million dollars, all reallocated from the current budget that finances Louisiana elections.

SECTION IV

No penalties.

SECTION V

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SECTION VI

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President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Danielle Pellegrin
Co-Sponsor: Laura Chen
Club: Haynes Academy
House Bill 85

AN ACT

TO: A Bill to Expand RS 14:44 to Include Human Trafficking Laws

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

Throughout the world, human trafficking has turned into a \$150 billion dollar industry (50% of which is from industrialized countries), and is in arms to pass up illegal sale of arms and drugs. Human trafficking can begin with the solicitation of young men and women; convincing them to move across state borders with someone. Yet it can also begin with forceful kidnapping. Trafficking primarily involves exploitation which comes in many forms, including forcing victims into prostitution, subjecting victims to slavery or involuntary servitude and compelling victims to commit sex acts for the purpose of creating pornography. In addition to this, said person may be sold over, and over again, and be exchanged between hands a multitude of times. Within Louisiana, the penalties for Human Trafficking range anywhere from 5 years, for purchasing and keeping a person, to no more than 50 years (when the victim is under the age of 21). Under RS 14:44 (Aggravated Kidnapping), Human Trafficking is applicable under three sections (1) The forcible seizing and carrying of any person from one place to another; or (2) The enticing or persuading of any person to go from one place to another; or (3) The imprisoning or forcible secreting of any person.

SECTION II

Since most Human Trafficking includes the act of not permitting a victim to leave, based on "debt bondage," RS 14:44 would need to be expanded to include: (4) Any violation of the law broadly defined as Human Trafficking. (RS 14:46.2-46.3) Under RS 14:46.2-46.3 the sentences of those convicted of Human Trafficking vary greatly (5-50 years.) Under the proposed bill, the sentence for someone convicted of Human Trafficking would be consistent with the sentence for Aggravated Kidnapping; life with hard labor and no parole. The penalty provisions under the amended RS 14:44 (Aggravated Kidnapping) would supersede the penalty provisions defined under RS 14:46.3-46.3 (Human Trafficking).

SECTION III

No funding is required.

SECTION IV

No penalties.

SECTION V

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SECTION VI

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President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Lara Nicholson
Club: Saint Joseph's Academy
House Bill 96

AN ACT

TO: Save the Teens: Implementing Online Mental Health Education for Louisiana School Counselors

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

The purpose of this bill is to provide school counselors with a more extensive knowledge base of mental health in order to help students who cannot get help from anywhere else. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in every 5 teenagers ages 13-18 have or will have a serious mental illness. In Louisiana, 37,000 teenagers experienced at least one Major Depressive Episode in 2014 alone. Additionally, 50% of all lifelong mental illnesses begin showing symptoms at 14, and take an average of 10 years before they are actually treated. As a result, 37% of students with mental illness drop out of school, and more importantly, 90% of people ages 10-24 who commit suicide, the 3rd leading cause of death among this age group, have at least one underlying mental illness. It is for this reason that mental health care must be better provided to students. Furthermore, stress levels caused by increased global demands for educational excellence amongst students are increasing, which can often lead to severe anxiety amongst students. This too has been shown to lead to growing teen suicide rates. Louisiana's students are dying, stressed, and in desperate need of help. For some, personal therapy is available, but for a great majority of students it is not an option. By providing both currently employed and future guidance counselors the resources to assist these students, Louisiana will be providing all of its students, the future citizens of Louisiana, the full help that they desire and need.

SECTION II

All school counselors must participate in a 2-hour web-based online training course (each lesson being 15 minutes) that will teach lessons pertaining to mental health, identifying mental disorders in teenagers, methods of discussion with the student and parents, and how to provide the student with resources to help treat mental illness. The course will be available for counselors to take any time. This course will be made available on July 1, 2017. Starting July 1, 2017, participation in this course will be mandatory for current school counselors in order to maintain a school counseling license. School counselors will have one year to take the course. Counselors must take the course again each year.

SECTION III

A 0.5% tax will be applied to the tobacco industry in order to create and maintain this online course while keeping it free of charge for school counselors. Any additional revenue will go towards renovating and refurbishing Louisiana public schools.

SECTION IV

Failure to participate in the online course by July 1 of each year will result in a revocation of the school counselor's license until he or she completes the course.

SECTION V

If any provision of the Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid the invalidity does not affect the other provisions or applications of the Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the Act are severable.

SECTION VI

All laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed

President of the Senate
Abigail Ezell

Speaker of the House
Ben Smith

Governor
Sarah Procopio

Sponsor: Spencer Heitman
Co-Sponsor: Luke Bella
Club: Catholic High School
House Bill 98

AN ACT

TO: Reallocate Funds from the Imprisonment of Nonviolent Drug Offenders

BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF LOUISIANA

SECTION I

It currently costs an average of \$17,486 to house an inmate in Louisiana for one year. As of October 2016, 7,921 nonviolent drug offenders were in these state and local facilities. This adds up to a cost of \$138,506,606 to imprison nonviolent drug offenders annually. The entire Department of Corrections budget for local and state housing of adult offenders in 2016 was \$161,185,998. That means that 85.9% of that budget is being spent on housing nonviolent drug offenders. Additionally, 156 drug offenders were imprisoned serving life sentences at that time. The excessive imprisonment of nonviolent drug offenders is economically unfeasible and is playing a major role in the current budget crisis, along with disparaging human rights and preventing people from making a positive contribution to society on the outside. The establishment of rehabilitation centers would be less costly than the imprisonment of these nonviolent people, and they would then be able to become taxpayers rather than tax consumers, along with gaining the ability to obtain jobs and positively contribute to society.

SECTION II

To combat the Louisiana budget crisis and prevent human rights violations of inmates, money normally spent on incarcerating those with nonviolent drug offenses will be reallocated toward establishing rehabilitation centers in which they can be acknowledged as victims and taught to overcome their addictions. 37 of these facilities would be established across the state to keep under 200 people to each facility, which would cost roughly \$118,400,000 annually, thus saving the state \$20,106,606 each year. Trained rehabilitation specialists will be hired, and the amount of time an inmate spends in the center is dependant upon the severity of their offense and their response to treatment. They will be allowed to carry out their day-to-day lives outside of these centers, as long as they continue to attend rehabilitation for the amount of time deemed necessary.

SECTION III

Taxpayer funding will not be necessary, as all necessary financing will come from the reallocation of money spent on imprisonment.

SECTION IV

Those who do not participate in these rehabilitation programs will return to prison under their original sentences.

SECTION V

If any provision of the Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid the invalidity does not affect the other provisions or applications of the Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the Act are severable.

SECTION VI

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