



John Bel Edwards
Governor

State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DRUG POLICY

Kristy Miller
Director

GOVERNOR'S DWI TASK FORCE August 23, 2023; 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Lisa Freeman, Chair of the DWI Task Force and Executive Director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC), called the meeting to order at 10:09 AM. Lisa Freeman and Kristy Miller, Director of Drug Policy announced that there were 11 members or proxies in attendance which achieved a quorum.

Welcome and Introductions

Lisa did a roll call for Voting Beginning with the voting members seated at the table, each member was asked to introduce him/herself. After these introductions, stakeholders were invited to introduce themselves as well.

Old Business- Discuss and Approve: Minutes from May 2023 meeting
Minutes were not approved due to being one member short of quorum.

New Business

A. Recap of LHSC's highly successful Impaired Driving Symposium

The Executive Briefing took place as a 2-hour event from 8 AM to 9:45 AM, with approximately 40 attendees in attendance. The event featured brief presentations by two nationally-renowned experts, Luke Niforatos and Teresa Haley.

During the Symposium, there were over 200 registered participants. Several VIPs, including three legislators, remained for the Symposium kick-off. The event began with opening remarks delivered by Col. Davis, the LSP Superintendent, and Chief Justice Weimer from the Louisiana Supreme Court. The keynote presentation was given by Luke Niforatos, who held the position of EVP at Smart Approaches to Marijuana. Following his presentation, Teresa Haley, President of the Illinois NAACP, delivered an interview-style presentation with Kristy Miller.

The Symposium included two panels featuring Louisiana's experts in public safety and impaired driving. The panels provided valuable insights and expertise on these critical topics. The event concluded with a closing session focused on promoting a positive traffic safety culture to reduce impaired driving.

B. 2023-2024 Impact Report: Lessons Learned from State Marijuana Legalization – viewing of Executive Briefing presentation by Luke Niforatos, Executive Vice President of Smart Approaches to Marijuana

Luke gave a very thorough overview of marijuana legalization and its impact as well as information to contribution regarding marijuana legalization added a critical dimension to the discussion, shedding light on the intersection of drug policy and impaired driving. His expertise contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities and solutions

associated with this issue. He provided insights into the impact of marijuana legalization on drug-impaired driving and public safety. Luke's presentation highlighted the relevance of marijuana legalization in the context of impaired driving, emphasizing the need for data-driven policies and strategies to address this evolving challenge.

C. Highlights of Interview with Teresa Haley, President of the Illinois NAACP, who spoke about false promises of equity and opportunity for community of color by marijuana legalization proponents – Kristy Miller, Director, Office of Drug Policy

At the conference Teresa Haley gave a brief overview regarding how between the years of 2014 and 2018, Illinois experienced a series of developments and efforts related to marijuana legalization, which included various opportunities and equity concerns.

In 2014, the state took a significant step by legalizing medical marijuana, offering patients access to this form of treatment. Two years later, in 2016, Illinois decriminalized the possession of less than 10 grams of marijuana, reducing the penalties associated with such possession.

In the subsequent years, the state saw attempts to fully legalize recreational marijuana. In 2017, a legalization bill was filed, but it did not pass. The following year, in 2018, another legalization bill was filed, but it also did not pass. However, late in 2018, J.B. Pritzker secured victory in the governor's election with a platform that included the promise to legalize marijuana. This marked a turning point in the state's approach to marijuana policy. The momentum toward marijuana legalization continued in 2019 when a legalization bill was filed for the third time. Notably, the NAACP expressed opposition to this bill, characterizing legalization as "a form of modern-day slavery." This perspective shed light on the equity concerns surrounding marijuana legalization, particularly with regard to communities of color. During this period, Teresa emphasized the importance of educating youth, adults, people of color, and policymakers about the implications of marijuana legalization before it reached the legislature. This proactive approach aimed to ensure that all stakeholders were informed about the potential opportunities and challenges associated with the evolving marijuana policies in Illinois.

It was further shared that in the past, Illinois made significant strides in marijuana legalization for recreational use, with several noteworthy events and developments. The culmination of these efforts came when Governor Pritzker signed the historic legislation, making the announcement through a press release with the headline, "Gov. Pritzker Signs Most Equity-Centric Law in Nation to Legalize Adult-Use Cannabis." This groundbreaking law aimed to prioritize equity in the cannabis industry. However, as the media reported, the promises of an equitable marijuana industry in Illinois fell short of expectations. Headlines read, (1) "IL Marijuana Industry Was Supposed to Bring Equity. Advocates Say Promises Fall Short," (2) "How the 'Most Equity-Centric' Law on Weed Went Wrong – and Where IL Can Go from Here," and (3) "Despite Promises, IL Lacks Black-Owned Cannabis Dispensaries." These headlines highlighted the challenges and disparities that persisted despite the intention to create a more equitable cannabis market.

During this period, efforts to advance population-level policies to reduce substance misuse remained a significant focus. A major leadership role was held as a policy advisor to a global foundation dedicated to advancing such policies. One notable instance of advocacy during this time was the opposition to the Cannabis Administration & Opportunity Act (CAOA), a nationwide bill aimed at legalizing and commercializing marijuana. The concerns raised revolved around the potential public health and societal impacts of widespread commercialization. Additionally, the NBA was called out for allowing players to promote marijuana, as this was viewed as a potential danger to the health of young fans. The advocacy efforts sought to address the potential risks associated with normalizing marijuana use among athletes and its influence on younger audiences.

D. Synopsis of Panel 1 – Drug Use and Impaired Driving: A Look at Data Across the Criminal Justice System – by panel members Johanna Braud, Norma DuBois, and Joey Jones

Johanna Braud, Director of the Office of Drug and Specialty Courts at the Louisiana Supreme Court, provided insights and data related to the impact of drug use on impaired driving within the criminal justice system.

Norma DuBois, Chief of the Vehicular and Specialty Courts Unit at the Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office, shared her perspective and experience in handling cases involving impaired driving.

Joey Jones, System Director at the North Louisiana Criminalistics Laboratory, contributed to the panel by presenting data and information related to drug testing, forensic analysis, and its significance in impaired driving cases.

E. Synopsis of Panel 2 – Public Safety Solutions: A Look at Innovative Solutions to Combat Drug-Impaired Driving across the Criminal Justice System – by panel members Jules Edwards, Randy Lanoux, and Jacqueline Sanchez

Lisa gave a brief synopsis on how Honorable Jules Edwards, LA Judicial Outreach Liaison and Judge for Lafayette City Court, provided insights into innovative approaches from a judicial perspective to combat drug-impaired driving. He emphasized the importance of legal and judicial strategies in addressing this critical issue.

Sergeant Randy Lanoux, a Drug Recognition Expert from the LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, shared his expertise in identifying and assessing drug-impaired drivers.

Jacqueline Sanchez the Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor at the LA District Attorneys Association, presented innovative legal solutions and strategies to combat drug-impaired driving.

F. A Conversation about the Future of the Governor's Task Force on DWI

Attendees took part in a robust conversation that involved community outreach and the sharing of information on driving impairment with citizens, as well as with schools and community members.

Recommendation Workgroup Updates

No Workgroup Updates during the meeting.

Other Business

Office of Drug Policy update

No DPB Updates during the meeting

Member agency updates

Lisa shared that Louisiana Highway Safety Commission will host its Impaired Driving Symposium on Wednesday July 26, 2023 in Baton Rouge, LA.

Comments from stakeholders and members of the public

Kristy called for comments from stakeholders and members of the public. She followed by two additional calls for comments. None were offered.

Upcoming Meetings of Other Office of Drug Policy boards

- Heroin & Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Council – September 7 @ 9AM
- Prevention Systems Committee – September 14 @ 10AM
- Drug Policy Board – October 26 @ 10AM
- State Epidemiology Workgroup – November 8 @ 10AM
- DWI Task Force – November 15 @ 10AM

Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, Lisa Freeman moved to adjourn the meeting 12:00 P.M. All members approved, none objected, none abstained.

DWI TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	Present
Attorney General's Office	Amanda Martin	No
Governor's Office of Drug Policy	Kristy Miller	Yes
House of Representatives member	Marcus Bryant	No
Office of Behavioral Health	Dr. Leslie Freeman	Yes
Office of Motor Vehicles	Robyn Temple	Yes
LA District Attorneys Association	Jacqueline Sanchez	Yes
Louisiana Highway Safety Commission	Lisa Freeman	Yes
Louisiana Alcohol and Tobacco Control	Ernest Legier	No
Department of Transportation and Development	Adriane McRae	Yes
Louisiana Sheriffs' Association	Sheriff K.P. Gibson	No
Louisiana State Police Crime Lab	Rebecca Chiasson	Yes
Louisiana State Police	Lt. Robert "Shawn" Owens	No
Property and Casualty Insurance Commission	Tom Travis	No
Senate Member	Vacant	--
Mothers Against Drunk Driving	Kelley Dair	No
LA Restaurant Association	Jeff Conaway	No
LA Association of Chiefs of Police	Chief Shayne Gibson	Yes
At-Large	Delia Brady	No
At-Large	Dr. Beau Clark	No
At-Large	Judge Jules Edwards (Ret.)	Yes

Guests

Tunde Animashawn - Office of Motor Vehicles
 Dortha Cummins - Louisiana Highway Safety Commission
 Shayla Polk – Governor's Office of Drug Policy
 Joey Jones- North Louisiana Crime Lab
 Crystal Lewis LDI
 Dr.Scott Smith - LSU CARTS
 Bobby Breland- LHSC