

# LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION

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## Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

### APPROVED MINUTES

October 27, 2023

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, October 27, 2023, in the Hainkel Room at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairman, Judge C. Wendell Manning, called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

#### II. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll and the following was noted:

##### MEMBERS PRESENT

Judge C. Wendell Manning, Chairman  
Belinda Cambre  
Jerry Raehal  
Belinda Davis  
Peggy Cotogno  
Clarence Copeland  
Representative Ivey  
Barry Erwin  
Keith Leger  
Judge Dagate  
Representative Freiberg  
Michael McClanahan  
Steven Procopio  
Kathleen Espinoza  
Lauren Ladner  
Jackson Wright

##### MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Beth Mizell  
Fredell Butler  
Judd Jeansonne  
Polly Johnson  
Michael Ince  
Michael Bell  
Jill Roshto  
Joel Watson  
Claston Bernard

**STAFF PRESENT**

Ann S. Brown, Senior Analyst  
Lily Dugas, Secretary

**III. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Judge Manning welcomed everyone. All commission members present introduced themselves.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Judge Manning noted two revisions to the minutes from May 12, 2023, relative to members present. Judge Manning then entertained a motion to approve the minutes with the revisions. Judge Dagate motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Belinda Davis. There being no objection, the minutes were approved.

**V. APPROVAL OF 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

Judge Manning explained that the members should have received a copy of the 2022-2023 Annual Report for review. Representative Freiberg moved to approve the annual report, seconded by Judge Dagate. There being no opposition, the annual report was approved.

**VI. PRESENTATIONS**

**A. "Why Louisiana Ain't Mississippi or any place else" (Educational resources on Louisiana History and Culture)**

Clarence Copeland, President of Louisiana Public Broadcasting, introduced Jay Dardenne, Commissioner of Administration, and Anne Arceneaux, Educational Specialist for Louisiana Public Broadcasting.

Jay Dardenne explained the conception of the project "Why Louisiana Ain't Mississippi or any place else," a 4-hour documentary about Louisiana's cultural and historical diversity. He also presented a coffee table book of the same name. He then played a short video that gave a preview of the documentary.

Anne Arceneaux presented the website [whylouisiana.lpb.org](http://whylouisiana.lpb.org). She went over a number of different lessons provided by the website covering a multitude of subjects relative to Louisiana's culture, landscape, history, and more. She further stated the need to spread the word about these resources and encourage teachers to use these resources in their classrooms.

Representative Freiberg and Anne Arceneaux discussed how these resources are being disseminated and how teachers are getting involved. They further discussed which age groups these resources cater to.

Judge Dagate thanked the panel for their work and encouraged everyone to watch the documentary.

Representative Ivey stated how important the presentation was and why it is important to highlight what makes Louisiana unique.

Belinda Davis thanked Louisiana Public Broadcasting for their work and said that she learned a lot from watching the documentary.

Clarence Copeland stated that the documentary will be played on Louisiana Public Broadcasting soon for anyone who wants to watch it for free.

### **B. Louisiana Girls State**

April Anderson, Program Director of Louisiana Girls State, explained that Girls State is a leadership development program where high school seniors can learn about government and democracy through mock governmental practices like campaigning, creating a political party platform, and voting.

Judge Manning thanked April for her presentation.

### **C. Louisiana Boys State**

Tian Cielatka, Vice Commander of the American Legion Department of Louisiana and Louisiana Boys State Commission Chair, and program staffers William Hogan and Micah Scott, introduced themselves and presented information about the history, purpose, and activities of American Legion and Boys State.

Representative Freiberg thanked both Girls and Boys state for presenting. She and Micah Scott further discussed how members of the commission could help these programs.

Clarence Copeland and William Hogan discussed why Boys state focuses on High School Seniors.

Jerry Raehal and William Hogan discussed how Boys State engages with community members outside of the program and how Mr. Raehal could help the program.

Jackson Wright stated his appreciation for the work that Boys State does.

Tony Betts, State Secretary of the American Legion, talked about "Vermillion Parish Government Day" where students go through a process similar to Boys State.

**D. "We the People, The Citizen and the Constitution" educational resources**

Peggy Cotogno, State Coordinator, provided an update on the program "We the People, The Citizen and the Constitution" including information on what the program does, how it is funded, how the program benefits and teaches students, and future prospects for the program.

**E. Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC)**

LYAC members Holly Phan, Dylan Rhoton, Samuel Ajiei, Lucille Kincade, and Emma Bonney introduced themselves and presented what LYAC has done in the past year, including a bill they helped pass in the Legislature and their win in the Invent2Prevent competition.

Judge Manning, Belinda Davis, Kieth Leger, and Emma Bonney discussed ways the commission could help support LYAC and its efforts.

Jackson Wright congratulated the students on their work. Mr. Wright and Holly Phan discussed how LYAC is working to make sure their bill is implemented and whether they have plans for introducing another bill in the next legislative session.

Dylan Rhoton further explained how the LYAC committees work together to present and discuss ideas for bills. Lucille Kincade further discussed what issues they are considering for their next bill and the importance of civic engagement for young people.

Belinda Davis gave the LYAC students information about a resource relative to student mental health spending.

Steven Procopio stressed the importance of civic engagement and congratulated the students on their hard work.

Jerry Rachal and Holly Phan discussed social media's impact on youth media literacy.

Belinda Cambre stressed the importance of civic engagement and media literacy among the youth. Dylan Rhoton explained what LYAC has done and plans to do to advocate for youth civic engagement.

Judge Manning thanked LYAC for their presentation.

**F. 2022-2023 Lawyers and Judges in the Classroom Presentations**

Peggy Cotogno gave an update on the Lawyers and Judges in the Classroom program and how it has impacted students around the state.

**VII. CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

**A. LYAC Scoring Committee**

Judge Manning stated the need for 5-6 volunteers from the commission for scoring LYAC applications in the spring.

**B. Committee to address commission structure and membership**

Judge Manning appointed Representative Freiberg, Clarence Copeland, Peggy Cotogno, and Barry Erwin to look at the makeup of the commission and come up with possible changes in statute to address quorum and membership.

**C. Final words**

Belinda Davis and Jackson Wright stated that this would be their last meeting with the commission and thanked everyone for their work.

Judge Manning thanked staff for their work in preparing for the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Belinda Davis made a motion to adjourn. Representative Ivey seconded that motion. There being no objection, the meeting adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Judge C. Wendell Manning  
Chairman

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Approval Date