

NEWSLETTER



LOUISIANA REGULAR SESSION OF 2025 LEGISLATURE ENDED ON JUNE 12

The Louisiana Legislature adjourned Sine Die on Thursday, June 12th, after two months of policymaking, spirited debate, and legislative advocacy. The [Louisiana Center for Health Equity \(LCHE\)](#) followed the session closely, tracking and advocating for policies that aligned with our [LA40by2030](#) initiative to improve healthcare outcomes and access for Louisiana's children and families. Although not all of LCHE's legislative interests were realized, the 2025 Regular Session passed several pieces of legislation that will continue Louisiana on the path toward progress in health equity. [Read more.](#)



KEY WINS FOR EQUITY AND JUSTICE

The 2025 Louisiana Legislative Session concluded last week, and it's time to reflect on what was a season marked by both intense challenges and remarkable victories. Through coordinated advocacy, diligent policy tracking, strong partnerships, and grassroots pressure, the Power Coalition is proud to have stood alongside our partners at the forefront of the fight for equity and justice. [Read more.](#)

A RECAP OF PAR'S WEBINAR: 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION - WHAT HAPPENED?

The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana hosted a webinar about the major takeaways from the recently concluded 2025 regular legislative session.

If you missed the webinar, want to reference information or share it with a friend, you can watch the recording on PAR's YouTube [Webinar Recording](#).

LAC OPPOSES SENATE'S PROPOSED RECONCILIATION PACKAGE, EMPHASIZING HARMS OF MEDICAID AND SNAP FUNDING CUTS

June 17, 2025: The U.S. Senate Finance and Agriculture Committees released their reconciliation text that, like the House-passed reconciliation bill, would effectuate the largest cut to Medicaid in the program's history and make fundamental and drastic changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) if enacted. [Read more.](#)

MY DAD WENT TO PRISON WHEN I WAS 5. NOW I WRITE ABOUT FAMILIES LIKE MINE

Growing up with a father who was incarcerated didn't define me. But it certainly taught me to challenge stereotypes and ask better questions. [Read more.](#)

FROM PRISON TO THE BOARDROOM

Some stories begin in darkness. For Michael M., that darkness came early, when at 15 years old, his mother left him to face the world alone. What followed were nights spent on cold benches, meals scavenged from trash cans, and eventually, a 10.5-year federal prison sentence.

[Read more.](#)

“

It isn't about where you start,
it's refusing to let that be where you finish.

— Michael M.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GOOD DAD — FROM INSIDE A PRISON CELL

For Shafiq, inside Sheridan Correctional Center, being a good dad while incarcerated means lots of emails and phone calls.

“Never underestimate the value of your presence in the lives of your offspring,” he writes. “We are physically absent, but that does NOT preclude our being present in all the other ways that matter.”

[Read more.](#)

THE PROFIT MOTIVE

A recent book unveils the shockingly long history of for-profit prisons—and the equally long history of incarcerated people demanding compensation for their exploited labor.

[Read more.](#)



Louisiana Regular Session of 2025 Legislature Ended on June 12



2025 Louisiana Legislative Session: It's a Wrap! *Here is a Recap of Highlights and LCHE Policy Priorities*

The Louisiana Legislature adjourned Sine Die on Thursday, June 12th, after two months of policymaking, spirited debate, and legislative advocacy. The [Louisiana Center for Health Equity \(LCHE\)](#) followed the session closely, tracking and advocating for policies that aligned with our [LA40by2030](#) initiative to improve healthcare outcomes and access for Louisiana's children and families. Although not all of LCHE's legislative interests were realized, the 2025 Regular Session passed several pieces of legislation that will continue Louisiana on the path toward progress in health equity.

Here's a recap of the priority legislative successes that LCHE supported this session:

• **Medicaid protection and expansion**

In light of proposed cuts to Medicaid at the federal level, legislators passed a [\\$53.5 billion budget plan](#) that preserves funding for Medicaid and other vital resources and programs. Policymakers also worked across the aisle to support [SCR32](#) (Sen. Patrick McMath), which memorializes the Congress of the United States to avoid cuts to the federal Medicaid program, affirming the Louisiana Legislature's commitment to safeguarding the health of Louisiana's residents. This session also saw the passage of [SB96](#) (Sen. McMath), which aims to reimburse Medicaid providers for mental health partial hospitalization services provided by licensed inpatient psychiatric hospitals. LCHE successfully supported Senator Larry Selders' [SB42](#), which requires commercial insurance and Medicaid coverage for voluntary inpatient treatment following a perinatal psychiatric diagnosis. The bill also ensures that inpatient admissions, medications, overnight stays, and mental health counseling associated with a perinatal psychiatric diagnosis must be covered. This bill, which has been sent to the Governor, is a key piece of maternal mental health legislation that will have an alleviating effect on perinatal mental health conditions.

• **Behavioral Health**

The 2025 Regular Session also saw significant advancements in behavioral health policy. Two pieces of legislation, [SB121](#) (Sen. Larry Selders) and [HB486](#) (Rep. Adrian Fisher), authorize and require public schools to provide mental health screenings to their students. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Academy of Pediatrics, Children's Hospital Association, and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry released a [joint statement](#) calling upon policymakers to increase the availability and quality of school-based mental healthcare; the passage of SB121 and HB486 represent Louisiana's endorsement of bold efforts reduce the risk of adverse mental health in children and adolescents statewide. [HB202](#) (Rep. Delisha Boyd), which requires postsecondary education institutions in Louisiana to provide voluntary privacy waivers, allows students to designate contacts to be notified in the event of a mental health crisis. This bill effectively protects the privacy of students' personal mental health information, while also providing mechanisms for designating support contacts that can provide necessary assistance during serious mental health crises. This bill, which has been signed into law, will go into effect 8/01/2025, in time for the beginning of the fall semester. LCHE also supported Senator Selders' [SB215](#), which would allow students, faculty, and school employees to take up to two mental health days per semester; this bill unfortunately died in committee.

• **Maternal Health and Child Health**

LCHE and fellow Maternal and Pediatric Health advocates worked to amplify several pieces of landmark legislation this session. Representative Dustin Miller's [HB454](#) passed, requiring Medicaid coverage for services provided by doulas. [HB382](#) was also signed into law. This piece of legislation aims to require insurance coverage for home visiting services for newborns and young children. [HB408](#), which requires coverage for pediatric acute neuropsychiatric syndrome and related conditions, also passed and was sent to the Governor. [HR292](#) urges and requests the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) to study the feasibility of updating its coverage policy to provide access to healthcare services for individuals at risk for gestational diabetes, setting the groundwork for improved Medicaid coverage for pregnant women. The passage of [HB525](#) enabled the creation of the Uterine Fibroids Commission within LDH for the purpose of addressing women's health issues related to endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and polycystic ovary syndrome. This bill prioritizes women's reproductive health challenges and furthers Louisiana on a path toward improving maternal health outcomes!

• **DEI Bill Defeat**

The 2025 Regular Session also touched on issues surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). [HB685](#) by Representative Emily Chenevert sought to restrict DEI practices in postsecondary education institutions and state agencies. By defining "DEI-related instructional content" as any content that relates to "systemic racism, institutional racism, anti-racism, systemic bias, and implicit bias", this bill had the potential to restrict vital instruction surrounding medical racism and race-based health injustices; instruction that will enable the next generation of health professionals to avoid these harmful practices and promote equitable healthcare administration. After heated debate in the House, HB685 stalled in the Senate.

The session was not without some drawbacks:

[SB130](#) (Sen. Heather Cloud) passed, creating a more rigorous Medicaid eligibility verification process that will cause tens of thousands to lose coverage. [HB539](#) (Rep. Stephanie Berault) intended to create a loan repayment program to help recruit specialist physicians to practice in Louisiana, increasing access to specialized medicine for citizens statewide; this bill unfortunately stalled in committee.

In closing, the 2025 Regular Session passed several incredible pieces of health policy that support continued efforts to improve maternal health, behavioral health, and adolescent health. Potential federal cuts to Medicaid may become an ongoing challenge, as well as more rigorous eligibility standards that may threaten the coverage of thousands, but the [Louisiana Center for Health Equity](#) remains committed to defending access to care for Louisianians of all backgrounds.

LAC Opposes Senate's Proposed Reconciliation Package, Emphasizing Harms of Medicaid and SNAP Funding Cuts

June 17, 2025: The U.S. Senate Finance and Agriculture Committees released their reconciliation text that, like the House-passed reconciliation bill, would effectuate the largest cut to Medicaid in the program's history and make fundamental and drastic changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) if enacted.

Even more so than the House-passed bill, these Senate proposals would terminate access to lifesaving health care and food assistance for low-income individuals and families to pay for tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefit the wealthiest Americans and corporations.

As the single largest payer for mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) care in the country, Medicaid has played a critical role in providing access to treatment and services for those with MH and SUD conditions. Cutting Medicaid will only make addressing the overdose crisis even more challenging.

The Senate Finance Committee proposal's cuts are deeper than the House-passed one, almost certainly resulting in even more people losing coverage than the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated for the House bill. The CBO [estimates](#) 16 million people would lose health coverage if the House passed legislation becomes law, including 7.8 million people who currently get their health insurance through Medicaid. The loss of coverage — and lives — under this new draft is going to be devastating.

While the House-passed bill contained provisions targeted at states with large populations and more robust safety net programs, like New York and California, the Senate Finance Committee's proposal goes even further by targeting the 40 states and the District of Columbia that expanded Medicaid with even deeper Medicaid cuts.

The draconian cuts to the Medicaid program in the form of new work requirements in the House-passed bill was made even worse in the Senate proposal by expanding the requirement to parents of dependents over the age of 14 (as opposed to no age limit in the House bill). The history of Medicaid work requirements in states that have implemented them indicates that these [requirements](#) do not lead to more people working or increased economic mobility — rather, they lead to people losing coverage, making it more difficult for them to work. Far from simply addressing “fraud, waste, and abuse” as claimed, if either the House-passed bill or Senate proposal is enacted, millions of eligible people will lose their Medicaid benefits due to the complexities of navigating bureaucratic red tape to prove hours worked or qualification for an exemption. These significant coverage losses are why the work requirement provision in the House-passed bill has a projected “savings” of \$344 billion. That is the savings expected because people who have access to healthcare today will lose that coverage if either of these proposals become law.

While the proposed cuts to SNAP in the Senate Agriculture Committee's text are not as far-reaching as the House-passed bill, the Senate proposal would still fundamentally alter the nature of SNAP by shifting costs to states that have historically been picked up by the federal government and putting significant pressure on already strained state budgets.

The Legal Action Center champions the rights of individuals with arrest and conviction records, substance use disorders, and HIV/AIDS — populations that will be disproportionately impacted by these harmful policies given the pervasive stigma and discrimination faced by many of these individuals that make securing and maintaining employment more challenging.

We are disappointed and disheartened that the Senate Finance Committee ignored the significant [majority](#) of the public who are opposed to and worried about the potential impacts of federal funding cuts to Medicaid. Rather than reject the House-passed reconciliation bill or propose a moderated version, the Senate Finance Committee decided to make it worse.

We urge the millions of people across this country who have been speaking up and making their voices heard to continue to do so and let the Senate know their proposal to cut Medicaid even further is unacceptable and just plain wrong. **This fight is not over — we can defeat this draconian legislation if we keep speaking up, [sharing our stories](#), and [fighting to protect Medicaid and SNAP](#).**

VIA THE POWER COALITION FOR EQUITY & JUSTICE:

The 2025 Louisiana Legislative Session concluded last week, and it's time to reflect on what was a season marked by both intense challenges and remarkable victories. Through coordinated advocacy, diligent policy tracking, strong partnerships, and grassroots pressure, the Power Coalition is proud to have stood alongside our partners at the forefront of the fight for equity and justice. Below is a summary of key wins, significant challenges, and the critical issues we will continue to monitor as we prepare for implementation and future sessions.

Key Wins for Equity and Justice

Thanks to your organizing efforts, several critical bills aligned with our mission made it to the Governor's desk:

- HB 405 – Voting Rights Transparency: Requires the Secretary of State to publicly share election law changes.
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- HB 100 (Signed by the Governor - Act 140) – Surveillance Reform: Prohibits bail bond agents from using cellular tracking devices.
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- HB 454 & HB 514 – Doula Access & Oversight: Expands Medicaid coverage and strengthens governance of the Doula Registry Board.
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- HB 457 – Solitary Confinement Reform: Provides educational and religious materials for incarcerated individuals in solitary confinement.
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- HB 584 (Signed by the Governor - Act 209) – Back on Track Youth Pilot: Creates a youth-centered incarceration alternative program.
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- SB 87 – Cash Bond Notification: Ensures those who post cash bonds receive warrant notifications.
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- SB 182 – Medicaid Emergency Protections: Secures continued Medicaid access during declared emergencies.
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- HR 314 – Community Investment Recognition: Urges the Louisiana Department of Health to expand immunization access and education in rural and low-income communities to prevent disease and improve public health
- SB 2 – Fluoride Ban Defeated: Preserves access to safe public water supplies.
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- HB 382 (Signed by the Governor - Act 190) – Health Insurance: Requires health insurance plans to cover home visiting services for families with newborns and young children.
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- HB 268 – Terminology Change Regarding Juvenile Pornography
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- HB 76 – Defeated: Criminalization of the intentional infection of sexually transmitted diseases.
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Housing Victories

- HB 262, HB 619, and SB 196: All anti-homelessness bills were successfully defeated.
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Health Victories

- HB 514, HB 454, SB 70, and HB 467 were all passed with strong support.
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- HB 400 (regressive health bill) was successfully killed.
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Voting Rights Progress

- SR 154: Established a task force to increase voter participation.
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- HB 405: Advanced election transparency.
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Early Childhood Education/Care Victories

- Maintained funding for Early Childhood Education in HB 1 (Budget Bill).
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- HB 579: Successfully established the Early Childhood Education Stability Fund.
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- HB 589: Although it eliminated some education committees, we were able to save the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission.
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- HB 352: Governor vetoed this bill, which would have eliminated background checks for early childhood certification for certain educators.
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- SB 233: Passed the School Readiness Tax Credit.
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Bills Passed with Amendments – A Fight Ahead

Some bills we opposed or had concerns with were passed but amended under pressure, reducing their most harmful provisions:

- HB 344: Expands permanent disciplinary labels.
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- HB 445: Addresses juvenile criminal record confidentiality and access.

(Cont'd)

- SB 95: Expands the use of electronic monitoring and criminalizes violations.
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- HB 690: Directs the Louisiana Surgeon General to create rules for handling emergency use medical treatments (EUA).
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- HB 575: Liability for unlawful termination of a pregnancy. While amended, it remains a deeply concerning bill.
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Challenges and Harmful Bills to Monitor

Despite our pushback, several damaging bills are now law or still under consideration:

- HB 5: Increases penalties for sex worker solicitation and expands the list of sex offenses.
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- SB 15: Expands immigration surveillance and criminalizes interference with federal immigration enforcement.
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- SB 100: Legal Status Data Collection raises privacy and civil rights concerns.
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- HB 208 (Signed by the Governor - Act 158): Further limits parole opportunities.
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- HB 260 (Signed by the Governor - Act 169): Expands second-degree murder charges, raising due process concerns.
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- HB 153 (Signed by the Governor - Act 151): Increases unemployment work search burdens.
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- HB 64: Expands the Attorney General's authority over federal legal matters.
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- HB 206: Requires legislative approval for election procedure changes, limiting flexibility.
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- SB 156 (Became law without the Governor's signature - Act 116): Grants legal recognition to in vitro embryos (embryo personhood).
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- HB 303: Risks increased surveillance and harm to immigrant communities.
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- SB 127 (Signed by the Governor - Act 111): Fast-tracks nuclear development with reduced oversight.
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- SB 244: Reorganizes DENR to fast-track approval of CCS projects in Louisiana.
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- SB 94 (Signed by the Governor - Act 105): Redefines environmental protections, weakening oversight.
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- HB 692: Classifies nuclear and natural gas as "green energy," potentially diluting clean energy investments.
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Emerging Threats & Uncertain Outcomes

Several passed bills continue to pose risks to democracy, health, and rights. We are monitoring their implementation closely:

- HB 206: Threatens responsive election policies.
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- HB 274: Transfers emergency management to the Military Department.
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- HB 425: Introduces biased abortion language and mandatory reporting.
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- SB 4 (Signed by the Governor - Act 89): Allows political signage at public schools.
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- HB 281 (Signed by the Governor - Act 75): Bans campaign apparel at polling locations.
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- HB 625 (Signed by the Governor - Act 212): Calls for a statewide constitutional amendment election on April 18, 2026.
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Strategic Wins That Shifted the Narrative

Amidst the flood of harmful policy, our collective efforts stopped or reshaped critical legislation:

- SB 74: Changes to juvenile criminal case jurisdiction were involuntarily deferred.
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- HB 400: The required parental consent for certain medical services was killed.
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- HB 685: The anti-DEI proposal was stopped outright.
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- HB 555 & HB 629: "Medical Freedom Act" bills were prevented from advancing.
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- Criminal Justice Bills: HB 344, HB 445, SB 95 – All passed with pressure-induced amendments.
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Additionally, VERA and other partners developed an analysis of March 29 election data that provided advocates with key tools to resist harmful constitutional amendments.

While we faced a tidal wave of harmful policy, your leadership, advocacy, and data-driven strategies ensured that people power continues to matter. Let's continue to build momentum through the interim—our work isn't over. We're already gearing up for implementation and community defense.

Thank you for standing firm, standing together, and standing for justice.