



## LOUISIANA SENATE

For Immediate Release  
04.20.16  
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### **SEN. CARTER'S PUSH FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION TO ADDRESS STATE REVENUE & BUDGET REFORMS CLEARS FIRST HURDLE**

#### **SENATE BILL 393 GAINS APPROVAL OF SENATE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

At the urging of District 7 State Senator Troy Carter (D – New Orleans), the members of the Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs approved Senate Bill 393. The bill requires that members of the legislature meet as delegates in a constitutional convention to examine the limitations placed in the current state constitution on the legislature's ability to deal with state revenue and budget issues. The constitutional restrictions along with certain state laws that dedicate dollars to specific programs and services mean that higher education and health care bear the brunt of any needed budget cuts.

“We have all had the conversation with constituents who repeatedly ask us why it is that health care and higher education continually get cut. We have to explain to them that pie chart that shows so much of our available state revenue is protected and out of reach. At some point we have to ask ourselves, who is in charge of changing that? It's the legislature. It's our job. We cannot continue to unfairly burden the same state programs and services over and over,” Sen. Carter said. “Our current constitution is 41 years old and has been amended over 183 times. It is clear that over the years a situation has developed that is hampering the state's economic growth and competitiveness as well as the quality of life of Louisiana residents. We must act now.”

The bill proposes that the members of the legislature convene as delegates to a constitutional convention July 10, 2016 for the purpose of revising the constitution regarding state revenue and finance matters and related issues. Legislators will systemically examine the various dedications and other restrictions that may inhibit the ability of elected officials to address needed state financial reforms. Any proposed revisions to the constitution must be adopted no later than August 9, 2016.

“I recognize that we will face a daunting task and will be treading into some difficult waters, but it is incumbent upon us to take on this responsibility as the elected officials voters have chosen to make the hard choices over the next four years. At the convention, we will be able to determine which dedications and restrictions are meritorious and need protections and which ones are less deserving and interfere with our responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayers' dollars and assets,” Sen. Carter said.

Senate Bill 393 requires the governor to call an election by August 16, 2016 for voters to consider any proposed changes in the state constitution.

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