



LOUISIANA SENATE

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LOUISIANA STATE SENATE BEGINS WORK AT 2017 REGULAR LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FOCUS ON TAX AND BUDGET MATTERS

The work of the Louisiana 2017 Regular Legislative Session is underway. This session is focused on specific tax and budget matters as required in the state constitution with limited discussion of other policy issues. Legislators filed 854 bills for consideration at the session prior to the session beginning – 618 in the House where most of the tax and budget matters must begin and 236 in the Senate.

Lawmakers begin this session facing continuing budget problems and revenue issues. Governor Edwards' proposed state spending plan is over \$400 million short of the dollars he says are needed to



fund such things as TOPS. To address that shortfall as well as the \$1.3 billion fiscal cliff in July 2018 when a series of temporary taxes and tax exemption suspensions end, the governor is also proposing an ambitious tax reform package involving significant changes in business and individual taxes and the state sales tax. There will also be discussion about a possible increase in the state's gasoline tax which has not been increased in over three decades to address

Louisiana's \$13 billion backlog in infrastructure needs.

"We are ready to get to work in the senate," Senate President John A. Alario, Jr. said. "The Senate looks forward to working with our colleagues in the House to address the many problems facing our state and our people."

Beyond the fiscal issues, legislators will consider a package of criminal justice reform proposals aimed at reducing the state's highest in the world incarceration rate. There will also be debate around the elimination of the death penalty in the state, equal pay for equal work proposals and increasing the minimum wage.

The session began at noon, Monday, April 10th and must end no later 6:00 p.m., Thursday June 8th.

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