



# 2019 LEGISLATIVE REFLECTION

## *A look at policies that align with the platform's vision*

As the first session to convene after the inception of LA Youth Platform (LYP), the 2019 Louisiana Legislative Session was a busy one for the platform's members. After talking with policy experts and think tank leaders, LYP created a youth-focused policy platform that called for a Louisiana with improvements in Education, Economic Development, Criminal Justice, and the Environment. This reflection focuses on policies from the session that made improvements aligned with the LYP's goals in those four areas.

Education funding saw key advances. The session adjourned with teachers receiving a pay raise and new state investments made in early childhood education. Higher education received \$50 million more this year in state funding which included full funding of the TOPS program. Bigger strides need to be made, but seeing the legislature prioritize public education funding is something to celebrate.

Praise-worthy policies that promoted economic development included the creation of a statewide ridesharing framework and a bill that prevents professional licensing boards from revoking a license due to an inability to repay student loans. Both are wins for the state's young professionals and students who want more transportation options and access to work.

Things were quieter for criminal justice and environmental policy improvements, but a bill that caps expungement fees for arrest charges and the formation of a rural water infrastructure committee are good steps.

# EDUCATION

## ***Hot for Teacher Pay Raises***

The legislature advanced the LYP's vision for a quality and competitive educational system in Louisiana when it [voted to increase funding](#) in the K-12 education formula. With the new formula increase, teachers will receive a raise of \$1000 and support staff will receive a raise of \$500. The funding formula increase passed with relatively low opposition garnering wide bipartisan support. Many legislators cited the desire to pay Louisiana teachers at a rate competitive to the southern regional average.

## ***The State Takes its First Steps***

Making a move in the right direction, the state put [\\$15 million of new investments](#) into early childhood education. The money will help more low-income families with young children enroll in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) giving parents access to child care services so they can go to work or pursue their education. Early childhood education is still underfunded and heavily reliant upon temporary federal grants, but taking a step to make at-home investments in our state's future is cause for optimism

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## ***Making Moving Forward Attainable***

Expungement is the process of erasing the legal record of an arrest in the eyes of the law. One of the first bills signed by the governor this session was [HB 9](#) which capped expungement fees at \$500 if someone was charged with multiple counts for the same arrest. Capping the expungement fee makes the possibility of removing a charge from a record more attainable for Louisiana's low-income citizens.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## *Lyft-ing the State Up*

The legislature passed [a bill creating a statewide framework for ridesharing companies](#) such as Uber and Lyft. The statewide expansion of ridesharing means a potential boon for Louisiana's local economies with driver earnings, consumer spending, and increased community mobility. More ridesharing options could also mean a decrease in drunk driving and an increase in transportation options for Louisiana's tourists and small, rural communities.

## *A Win for Workers*

Previously under Louisiana law, if you had student loan debt, were unable to pay it back, and had a job that required licensing by the state, then that license could be revoked by Louisiana's occupational licensing boards. With the passage of [HB 423](#), those provisions were repealed and the previous ability to strip licenses due to unpayable student debt was halted. This helps put an end to the risk of Louisiana's workers losing their ability to make a living.

# ENVIRONMENT

## *Navigating the Waters of Compliance*

LYP's vision for Louisiana includes ensuring every community has consistent access to drinkable water. The [establishment of a rural water infrastructure committee](#) within the governor's cabinet is a step toward realizing that goal. The committee is charged with 1) determining criteria that water systems must meet to receive funding, 2) looking for ways to incentivize compliance, and 3) providing technical assistance to local governments and non-profits to improve their water infrastructure. LYP is looking forward to the improvements that spring from the committee.