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LOUISIANA STATE SENATE BEGINS WORK AT 2019 REGULAR SESSION

Today, Monday, April 8, 2019, marks the beginning of the 2019 Regular Session of the Louisiana State Legislature. This session, as required by the state constitution, is a fiscal session – one focused on the discussion of certain tax and spending issues with limited consideration of other general issues. The emphasis on taxes and the budget is especially appropriate this year as there is an indication that the budget picture in Louisiana is improving.

With a reported surplus for fiscal year 2018 and the possibility of an increased revenue forecast for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 on the table, the legislature is in a better posture to craft a budget than it has been in any of the preceding ten sessions over the last three years. This however, does not mean that the effort to pass a budget will not continue to be contentious, as two competing budget bills have been filed.

“Despite the uncertainty surrounding this year’s budget, we are fortunate to be working with numbers that demonstrate an improved fiscal picture,” said Senate President John A. Alario, Jr. “Our priority in the senate is to look beyond the politics of the budgeting process to do what we have always strived to do – pass a budget that protects our citizens, keeps our healthcare system intact, provides quality education systems for our children and young adults, and ensures the basic needs of the state are met.”

Lawmakers are also set to consider a host of measures that deal with other important issues including transportation and infrastructure funding, minimum wage increases, sports betting, and teacher pay raises.

“While the constitution limits discussion of general matters in this year’s session, there are many important state issues up for debate,” said Senate President Pro-Tempore Gerald Long. “I am hopeful that we will be able to work across party lines to pass meaningful legislation that best serves the interests of our state and citizens.”

In advance of the start of the session, legislators pre-filed 221 Senate Bills and 583 House Bills for consideration. Legislators may file up to 5 additional measures that deal with specific revenue, tax and budget issues after the start of the session. The 2019 Regular Session must end by June 6, 2019.

Citizens can follow the work of the 2019 Regular Session on the Internet at www.senate.la.gov or www.legis.la.gov where they can read, track, and print bills, review committee schedules and agendas, and watch legislative proceedings live or through the legislature's video archives.

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