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February 9, 2024
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[BACKGROUND NOISE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: The house will come to order. The clerk will open the machines for rollcall. Members vote your machines. Are you through voting, Jordan? Fisher? Jordan? Fisher? Members are you through voting? Emerson?

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

The clerk will close the machine. We have 104 members present in quorum.

[00:05:01]

The house will be opened in prayer by Representative Amedee. Please rise.

REPRESENTATIVE AMEDEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Heavenly Father, we come before you today. We thank you, first of all, for your precious Son. We thank you, Lord, that you could have placed us anywhere in time, and anywhere on this globe. And you saw fit to place each one of us here and now. And you also saw fit to place each legislator in their seat for such a time as this. Lord, I ask that you would help us to never take that lightly. I ask that you would guide us with the serious matters that come before us. And in this opening of this class of the legislature for the next four years, also ask that each day when we come here, we would never lose the awe of this building and all that it stands for. And we would never forget the people who sent us here to represent them. May we always legislate with Louisiana in mind. May we always make decisions that align with your vision for our state. May we take steps to bring Louisiana to the place where she leads as you planned, in Jesus name.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Thank you, Representative Amedee. Representative Knox will lead us in Pledge of Allegiance.

REPRESENTATIVE KNOX: I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Morning hour number five.

FEMALE 1: Mr. Speaker, and members, the house is in receipt of a proclamation by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Louisiana Constitution, I, Jeff Landry, Governor in the State of Louisiana do hereby call and convene the legislature of Louisiana into extraordinary session to convene State Capital, City of Baton Rouge during eight calendar days, beginning 4:00 PM on the 15th day of January and ending no later than 6:00 PM on the 23rd day of January. The call includes 14 items and is signed by Jeff Landry, governor of the State of Louisiana.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

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EXHIBIT
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Members, the speaker appoints the following committee to notify the governor that the house is convened and is ready to conduct business. Those members are Representatives Bayham, Emerson, LaFleur, Moore and Owen. Again, Representative Bayham, Emerson LaFleur, Moore, Owen, please meet Stephen Lewis near the rear of the chamber. Please raise your hand. And Emerson, I think I may have forgotten you. Committee to notify the senate, Representative Billings, Representative Echols, Representative Larvadain, Representative Ventrella, Representative Willard, please meet Mr. Francoise near the middle rear of the chamber to notify the senate, Representatives Billings, Echols, Larvadain, Ventrella and Willard.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[00:10:00]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Representative Newell for a personal privilege.

REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. First, I want to just say thank you to my colleagues who called, who sent cards, who attended. Most of you all know that my mom passed on the last day of the last special session that we had. And these past few months have been filled with a lot of firsts for me. My first birthday without the woman that gave birth to me. My first Thanksgiving without the woman that taught me how to cook. My first Christmas without the woman who made sure that Santa had all the gifts on my list. Today would have been my mama's 71st birthday. And this past Monday when we got sworn in, my biggest cheerleader was not here with me. I had intended -- fix your face. I could see you, Schlegel. Don't make me cry. I thought I would be spending today with my dad and with my mom's sisters, but that is not the case. Members, we are here in these rails for one term representing the people of our districts, and I am curious and hopeful about what we will uncover on Louisiana over the next four years. Today, please not let it be lost on us that we start this term and most of you are starting your very first term as legislators. Some are second, some are third with the most important redistricting session on a most fitting and significant day. Starting this redistricting session on Martin Luther King Day has been a controversial and a sensitive issue to some and it seems to be disrespectful to the legacy of Dr. King and his fight for civil rights and voting rights. Some of our constituents, neighbors and supportive, had touted that the beginning of a redistricting session on King Holiday is a fitting tribute to Dr. King's legacy as it is an opportunity to ensure that the electoral districts reflect the diversity and needs of the communities that we all serve. Starting this session on King Holiday is not intended to be disrespectful or divisive, but rather an effort to fulfill a constitutional and legal duty and to meet a tight deadline imposed on us by the courts and the federal government. We have drastically different opinions on how this redistricting session is being started on Martin Luther King's holiday and those opinions have been heavily contested and it's a controversial task of redistricting. But we must remember that this is a matter that will have a significant impact on the representation and power of different groups of voters, which, if not done with consideration of context and circumstances of each district, can undermine the principle of one person, one vote and the democratic rights of the people that we serve. Dr. King's cause went beyond white and black. He also dealt with concerns of poverty, privilege and access, particularly at the voting polls. Ultimately, holding a redistricting session today on King's

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holiday is a matter of debate and perspective. Therefore, any redistricting session should be guided by the values of justice, dignity and democracy that Dr. King embodied and advocated for. Thus, in the spirit of democracy, I want to remind all of our citizens and constituents that all of our sessions is open and accessible to the public. Anyone can attend and we, your legislative body, should be committed to following the principles of fairness and equality in the redistricting process. I do not believe any of us in this chamber is committed to forgetting an unerasable history and repeating or perpetuating the suppressive practices and ideologies of those such as Thurman and Wallace. We have come a long way considering the history of the south and with this governor's commitment to keeping Louisianans in Louisiana.

[00:15:02]

This is our opportunity to show all citizens that we are not only working to create opportunities of education and employment for Louisiana citizens, but also giving them fair elections and the opportunity to elect a candidate of choice. I am hopeful about the outcome of this session. And again, considering the dedication of Governor Landry and our Speaker DeVillier of ensuring this body will create that second minority majority district. On Martin Luther King's holiday, let us remember his contribution and sacrifice to voting rights and remember his words, "The time is always right to do what is right." Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Thank you, Representative Newell.

FEMALE 1: Mr. Speaker and members, Representative Brown requests five days leave for his seatmate, Representative LaCombe.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Without objection.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

FEMALE 1: Mr. Speaker and members, the Senate committee has appeared and is prepared to provide a report.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Senator Seabaugh.

SENATOR SEABAUGH: Members, we are here to advise that the Senate has convened and we are ready to do business. And I look forward to working with you all from over there.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Thank you, Senator.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

FEMALE 1: Mr. Speaker and members, the committee sent to notify the governor has returned and is prepared to give a report.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Representative Emerson.

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REPRESENTATIVE EMERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members, we have notified the governor that the House is ready to do business.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Thank you, Representative Emerson.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

FEMALE 1: Mr. Speaker, the committee sent to notify the Senate has return with a report.

REPRESENTATIVE BILLINGS: Mr. Speaker, we have reported to the Senate.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: I'm sorry, Representative Billings.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

REPRESENTATIVE BILLINGS: I'll say it again. Mr. Speaker, we have reported to the Senate that we are open and ready for business.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Thank you, Representative. Representative Larvadain for a personal privilege.

REPRESENTATIVE LARVADAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members, can I get your attention, please? Members.

[00:20:00]

Today is my grandson, Brandon Jackson's birthday. I want to wish him a happy three-year-old. I love him and I appreciate him. I want to wish Brandon a happy birthday and also Jordan. I love him and may God continue to bless him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Thank you. Representative Larvadain. Morning hour number six.

FEMALE 1: Introduction of resolutions, the house concurrent resolution by Representative Willard to create a task force to study reforms to Louisiana's process of redistricting and methods of elections, promote efficiency, and ensure eligible Louisiana voters can effectively participate in the process. That resolution becomes HR-1.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Representative Mike Johnson moves to suspend the rules for the purpose of referring this committee. Is there any objection? To House and governmental affairs? Without objection. So order.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[00:25:00]

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SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Representative Cruz for a personal privilege.

REPRESENTATIVE CRUZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members, if you've been looking at your chamber laptop, there was a reminder sent out. If you want your per diem payments non taxed, you need to sign that form today and get it to house accounting so per diem payment can be tax free if you sign that form and submit it today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Thank you, Representative Cruz. Morning hour number seven.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Wilford Carter constitutional amendment proposing to amend Article 5 of the Constitution of Louisiana and provides relative to conversation to Supreme Court.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Representative Mike Johnson moves for a suspension of the rules for the purpose of referring all pre filed House Bills to the committee at this time without objection so order, House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Wilford Carter to enact Title 18 governmental districts redistricting positions offices based on congressional districts.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Wilford Carter Title 13 Supreme Court redistricting Supreme Court districts billing of vacancies additional judgeships becomes House Bill 3.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Marcelle Title 18 campaign finance provide for assessment of penalties becomes House Bill 4.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Marcelle Title 18 congressional districts redistricting of congressional districts positions offices based on congressional districts becomes House Bill 5.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Mandie Landry Title 18 elections nature of judicial elections exempt certain candidates from additional fees becomes House Bill 6.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

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FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Melerine Title 13 Supreme Court redistricting Supreme Court justice districts into nine districts filling of vacancies to eliminate certain additional judgeships becomes House Bill 7.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Mike Johnson Title 13 Supreme Court redistricting Supreme Court districts provide for the filling of vacancies additional judgeship becomes House Bill 8.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Mandie Landry Title 18 voting by mail distribution of vote by mail ballots application for vote by mail ballot becomes House Bill 9.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Jackson Title 18 financial disclosure statements filing of financial disclosure statements after qualifying for office becomes House Bill 10.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative by Jackson Title 18 campaign contribution limits provide relative to application of campaign contribution limits for calendar year becomes House Bill 11.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Wright Title 18 party primary elections nature of primary elections mandate legislature provide for party primary elections for certain offices becomes House Bill 12.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Melerine joint resolution to amend the Constitution relative to Supreme Court number of justices of the Supreme Court number of justices required to concur in order to render a judgment becomes House Bill 13.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Echols Title 18 congressional districts redistricting Louisiana's congressional districts positions offices based on those congressional districts becomes House Bill 14.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

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FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative Wilford Carter Supreme Court redistricting Supreme Court justice district filling of vacancies to eliminate statutory provisions regarding additional judgeship becomes House Bill 15.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: House Bill by Representative McFarland to appropriate funds, make certain reductions from certain sources be allocated to designated agencies purposes for the purpose of making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2023 through '24 becomes House Bill 16.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Appropriations.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Members we're going to stand at ease and we're pinning a joint session.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[00:30:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[00:35:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Members, if you can head towards your seats so we can begin. Members, if you could take your seat, we'd appreciate it.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Members, we have one message that needs to be read. Members, please take your seats. Morning hour number five.

FEMALE 1: Petitions Memorials Communications, the House and receipt of a message from the Senate to the Honorable speaker, members of the House of Representatives. I am directed to inform your honorable body that the Senate has adopted and asks concurrence in the following SCRs. SCR1 respectfully submitted, Yolanda Dixon, Secretary of the Senate. SCR1 by Sarah Barrow to invite the Honorable Jeff Landry, Governor of Louisiana to address a joint session of the Legislature. Representative Marcelle moves to spin the rules for the purpose of concurring in this resolution at this time.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Without objection.

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SPEAKER DEVILLIER: The Joint Session will come to order. President Barrow moves to dispense of the calling of role of the Senate without objection so ordered. President pro tempore Mike Johnson moves to dispense with the calling of the role of the House without objection so ordered.

[00:40:00]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: The President appoints, on part of the Senate, the following members to escort the Governor: Senators Harris, Pressly, Jenkins, Talbot and Owens. Harris, Pressly, Jenkins, Talbot and Owens. The speaker appoints on the part of the House the following members to escort the Governor: Bayham, Moore, Emerson, Owen and LaFleur. Go to the back door. That committee will assemble and discharge their duties. Those members need to go get the Governor. The ones I just read out, like get up and walk back there and then he walks in. Go ahead. Harris, Pressly, Jenkins. I know you all are here. They're all back there. Well, come on down, gentlemen. Come on. The members come out first. The members come out first, then the Governor. There we go.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Members, Governor Jeff Landry.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Right there. I think if you could sit in. There we go. Thank you, buddy. All right. Members, we'd like to recognize Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Secretary of State Nancy Landry.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Attorney General Liz Murrill.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Treasurer John Fleming.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Agriculture Commissioner Mike Strain.

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[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: And Commissioner of Insurance Tim Temple.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: We also have members of the Supreme Court here. Justice Weimer.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Justice Crain, Justice Genovese, Justice McCallum, Justice Hughes and Justice Griffin. Thank you all for being here.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Representative Jason Hughes will lead us in the prayer and please remain standing afterwards for the pledge.

REPRESENTATIVE JASON HUGHES: All things work together for good, to those who are called before the Lord and are called according to His purpose. Members, let's go before the Lord in prayer. Father God, we thank You for this day that You have made. And with all going on in the world, Father, we are going to rejoice and be glad in it. Father, the Bible tells us to humble ourselves before You, and good will come from it. So, Father, we come before You as humbly as we know how first and foremost to say thank You, Father. Thank You for this extraordinary opportunity, Father. Father, I thank You on behalf of every person in this body, for our Governor Jeff Landry and his wife Sharon. Father, please guide his stewardship of this great State of Louisiana as he oversees 4.6 million people, Father God. Father, we thank You for all of the statewide elected officials assembled before us, may You guide them as well. Father, we thank You for our Senate President, our Speaker of the House, our respective pro tems, clerk, secretary, sergeant-at-arms, and all of the staff that keeps these noble bodies running each and every day, Father.

[00:45:11]

Father, we can't do this work without them and we are so thankful. Father, we thank You for the members of our Judiciary, our Supreme Court that are gathered here today. Father, may You continue to stand in their bodies, think with their minds and speak with their voices as they do the work of the Judiciary, Father. Father, out of 4.6 million people, You have selected, ordained, appointed, anointed only 144 people to lead the legislative branch of government. What an awesome responsibility and task that is. Father, may You remind us every day that we are all created by You. May we not see political party. May we not see race. May we not see gender. May we just see people and do the work that You have called us to do. Now, Father, let Your sweet, sweet spirit fill this place. Father, bless everyone under the sound of my voice, from this podium to the door, from the balcony to the floor, from the crowns of our heads to the soles of our feet, oh, Lord, our strength and our redeemer. And Lord, in everything, let us be so very

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careful to give You all the praise, all the glory and all the honor. Now, let us go forth conquer and do the work that You have called us to do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Let all of the people of God join me in saying. Amen!

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Amen!

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Please remain standing for the pledge. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Ladies and gentlemen, the Governor of Louisiana, the Honorable Jeff Landry.

[APPLAUSE]

GOVERNOR JEFF LANDRY: Mr. President, I would tell you and the representatives and senators that escorted me that we'll do this at least one more time before the regular session and so, we'll have it perfected for the rest of the term. Please sit. Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the House and Senate, thank you for your cordial welcome. May I begin by recognizing on this day Dr. Martin Luther King, whose moral fortitude and spiritual inspiration allowed millions to live the American dream. And I would like to begin with one of my favorite quotes of his many, that the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in the moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. Our stage DNA is directly connected to the diverse and varied relationships that we all share with one another. Diverse relationships between our friends, our acquaintance, our neighbors, our old classmates, our co-workers, our caregivers, our colleagues, our family and each other right here in this room. For our culture is built upon relationships. And we are here today because we have inherited the issues that others have laid at our feet. So let us accept that task. Let us do the work that is incumbent upon us so that we can move towards solving much larger problems for the people of this great State.

[APPLAUSE]

GOVERNOR JEFF LANDRY: Now I am well aware that Huey Long was shot over redistricting matters. And I am hopeful and I am confident that we can dispose of this matter without you all disposing of me. Is that fair? Because for various reasons, both known and unknown, spoken and unspoken, closure of this redistricting problem has evaded us. It is time to stop averting the issue and confront it head-on. We are here today because the federal courts have ordered us to perform our job. Our job which is not finished, our job that our own laws direct us to complete, and our job that our individual oaths promise we would perform.

[00:50:01]

GOVERNOR JEFF LANDRY: To that end, I ask you to join me in adopting the redistricting maps that are proposed. These maps will satisfy the court and ensure that the congressional

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districts of our State are made right here in this Legislature and not by some heavy handed federal judge.

[APPLAUSE]

GOVERNOR JEFF LANDRY: We do not need a federal judge to do for us what the people of Louisiana have elected you to do for them. You are the voice of the people, and it is time that you use that voice. The people have sent us here to solve problems, not to exacerbate them, to heal divisions, not to widen them. To be fair and to be reasonable, the people of this State expect us to operate government efficiently and to act within the compliance of the laws of our nation and of our courts, even when we disagree with both of them and let me say this. I know that many of you in this Legislature have worked hard and endured and tried your very best to get this right. As Attorney General, I did everything I could to dispose off this litigation. I defended the redistricting plan adopted by this body as the will of the people. We sought a stay in the Fifth Circuit. We successfully stayed the case at the United States Supreme Court for more than a year, allowing the 2022 elections to proceed. Last October, we filed for writ mandamus, which was granted in the Fifth Circuit, which would again allow us one more chance to take care of our business. However, when the Fifth Circuit panel ruled against us later in the fall, we filed for an en banc hearing, which they denied. We have exhausted all legal remedies and we have labored with this issue for far too long. I recognize the difficulty of getting 144 people to agree on anything. My wife and I don't agree on everything. She's kept me for 21 years. But I sincerely commend you for the work you have done so far. But now, once and for all, I think it's time that we put this to bed. Let us make the necessary adjustments to heed the instructions of the court. Take the pen out of the hand of a non-elected judge and place it in your hands. In the hands of the people. It's really that simple.

[APPLAUSE]

GOVERNOR JEFF LANDRY: I would beg you, help me make this a reality in this special session, for this special purpose, on this special day. The redistricting challenge goes further than just our congressional maps. While one federal judge has the pen in her hand, another is eager to pick it up from his desk and redraw our Supreme Court. In 2021, in a regular session, the Senate passed a resolution, Resolution 248, asking the State Supreme Court to provide this Legislature with the recommendations for redistricting their court. A wide majority of the court, over two-thirds, has responded. Justice McCallum, Justice Genovese, Justice Crane, Justice Hughes, and Justice Griffin, have conscientiously and unselfishly and courageously stepped forward and presented us with a map that redraws the Supreme Court districts in a manner that will comply with the Voting Rights Act and alleviate the costly litigation to the State. You can fulfill your responsibility and honorably meet your obligation to redistrict our high court so that the people of Louisiana will have a fair, democratic, and equally represented judiciary. The litigation involving our Supreme Court districts has been pending for quite some time. In fact, there are cases in all three federal districts in the State.

[00:55:04]

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GOVERNOR JEFF LANDRY: Again, as Attorney General, we worked to defend the State and to have those cases dismissed. I know, firsthand, how indefensible these cases are. Our Supreme Court districts have been redistricted by this Legislature only one time in 103 years. The result is that districts are grossly unbalanced with two districts twice as large as another one. Last year, I negotiated a scheduling order with the plaintiffs in one of those cases, allowing the Legislature, allowing you all a chance to willingly handle our own affairs rather than unwillingly have it done by another nonelected federal judge. I want to publicly commend the justices for their willingness to set aside any regard for their own careers or the power that they hold. They epitomize statesmanship, honor, integrity, and the very embodiment of fairness. They are a reflection of our people's goodness, decency and justness. Every single person in this great State can look up to them with pride and reverence and a reborn confidence that the judicial system in this State is great and filled with men and women who will absolutely do the right thing.

[APPLAUSE]

GOVERNOR JEFF LANDRY: Just as we would respect and honor and comply with any decision reached by such a majority of this court. I ask you to respect that and adopt the court's redistricting map and allow the first seat to be filled this fall. Now, every voting age citizen in Louisiana may or may not join a political party of his or her choosing. It is a choice. It is their freedom. But if you choose to join a political party, it certainly is only fair and right that you have the ability to select your party's candidate for office without the interference of another party or without the distraction and the interference of a convoluted, complicated and extended ballot to wade through and to decipher.

[APPLAUSE]

GOVERNOR JEFF LANDRY: As I travel the State, I have listened carefully to those who seek a more focused, electoral process where they may participate in the nomination of their party's chosen candidate. And I believe it is an issue that our Legislature should consider and we have included a proposal for a closed party primary system for your consideration for that very reason. Because it's about fairness, it's about simplicity, it's about clarity and we have tested this system before in this State, and it works. The United States House Majority Leader Steve Scalise is in his seat as a result of being elected to Congress under a party primary system. Our State Treasurer was elected to Congress under a tried and tested system. I was elected to Congress under a party primary system. President Joe Biden was elected in Louisiana's presidential primary, as was President Trump, and other presidential nominees that were put forward by this State were chosen in a party primary system which allows the major parties to pick their candidates. It is fair and it is common sense. And as for our independent or no party voters, who by their own choice, decide not to join a party, their voice is heard and their votes are counted. Counted on a simpler, shorter, clearer November election ballot containing generally one Democrat, one Republican, and ballot qualifying independent candidates. Some things make Louisiana unique. Our food, our music, and our culture. These are sources of our pride. However, our jungle primary system is the only one of its kind in this country. It is a relic of the past, which I believe has left us dead last.

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[APPLAUSE]

[01:00:07]

GOVERNOR JEFF LANDRY: All of our fellow southern states are succeeding, they have a closed primary system, a process which results in stronger, more unified elected leaders. It is time to rewrite our story and to move to a similar system. We have already tried, we have already tested and still use in presidential primaries and will use in February of this year. As we work on other electoral reforms with these redistricting maps. Now is the time to also deal, I believe, with this commonsense change. Today, we honor Dr. Martin Luther King. And I do not believe that it is mere irony that finds us here today on this great day, on this consecrated day, where we seek to amplify the voice of few, where we seek to broaden the opportunity for participation in the government and governance of our people. The courage and the wisdom and the relentless pursuit of fairness in our electoral process was exactly what Dr. King spoke for. And so, it should be profoundly moving that we do this on this day. In fact, his words in 1968, I believe, are wholly appropriate 56 years later at this very hour where he said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." You see, for Dr. King's, his was an uphill journey into the headwinds of hate. His was a march into a battle, while ours is a mere walk in the park. His was a persecution for speaking his truth, while ours is just a comfortable dialogue. His was a mighty shove, while yours is simply a mere push of the button. Ladies and gentlemen, let us take these affairs and the things that have divided us in this state off the table so we can begin the work that the people have sent us here. God bless you. God bless each and every one of you. God bless the people of Louisiana, and God bless the people we represent. Thank you so very much.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Thank you, governor. Senator McMath moves that the senate retire to its chambers without objection.

[01:05:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

Members, we're waiting on additional bills to be filed, so please don't leave. Members, we're waiting on additional bills to be filed, so please do not leave.

[01:10:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:15:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Morning hour number seven.

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FEMALE 1: Mr. Speaker and members, the House Bill by Representative Emerson to amend and reenact Title 18 relative to elections party primary system of elections for certain office as provides relative to nominations, recognized political parties voting and that bill becomes House Bill 17.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Representative Mike Johnson moves to suspend the rules for the purpose of referring the pre-filed House Bills to committee at this time. House and Governmental.

FEMALE 1: A House Bill by Representative Wright joint resolution to amend the constitution, to amend Title V provides relative to Supreme Court election, statewide election of Supreme Court justices, elimination of Supreme Court District submission of proposed amendment to the electors. That bill becomes House Bill 18.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: House and Governmental.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Okay, members, we're going to stand at ease until we get committee notices.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:20:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:25:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:30:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Announcements.

FEMALE 1: Announcements Mr. Speaker and members, Committee on Appropriations meets tomorrow morning, Tuesday, January 16 at 8:30 a.m., Committee Room 6 and Chair McFarland may suspend the rules for the purpose of hearing House Bill 16 at that meeting.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Without objection.

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FEMALE 1: Committee on House and Governmental Affairs will meet 10:00 a.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, January 16, Committee Room 5 and Representative Vallee moves to suspend the rules for the purpose of adding House Bill 6, 8, 9 and 17 to that agenda.

[01:35:05]

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: Without objection. Representative Thompson for a Motion.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, members, I move that we adjourned to 3:00 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

SPEAKER DEVILLIER: The House is adjourned.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:40:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:45:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:45:34]