

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 576

BY REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY

STATE DEPARTMENT: Transfers the Old Governor's Mansion to the Department of State

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 49:141 and to enact Chapter 5-S of Title 25 of the Louisiana  
3 Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 25:380.161 through 380.166,  
4 relative to the Old Governor's Mansion; to transfer the Old Governor's Mansion to  
5 the Department of State; to provide for the powers, duties, functions, and  
6 responsibilities of the secretary of state and the department; to provide relative to  
7 operations and funding; to provide for effectiveness; and to provide for related  
8 matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. Chapter 5-S of Title 25 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,  
11 comprised of R.S. 25:380.161 through 380.166, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 CHAPTER 5-S. OLD GOVERNOR'S MANSION

13 §380.161. Definitions

14 For the purposes of this Chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings  
15 indicated unless the context clearly provides otherwise:

16 (1) "Department" means the Department of State.

17 (2) "Secretary" means the secretary of state.

1        §380.162. Establishment and location; purpose and use

2            A. The Old Governor's Mansion is established as a facility in the City of  
3        Baton Rouge under the overall jurisdiction of the department, as more specifically  
4        provided in this Chapter.

5            B. The secretary shall have custody, control, and supervision of maintenance  
6        of the Old Governor's Mansion and its contents. Title to the Old Governor's Mansion  
7        shall remain in the state of Louisiana, along with all buildings and other  
8        improvements constructed thereon. All of the management, functions, programs, and  
9        operations of every kind of the Old Governor's Mansion shall be exercised and  
10       performed by the secretary.

11          C. For purposes of administration and supervision of the Old Governor's  
12       Mansion, the secretary shall have full authority over its grounds and all other  
13       buildings and improvements constructed thereon, and shall control any use made  
14       thereof and the space therein.

15          D. The Old Governor's Mansion shall be a historical, cultural, and  
16       educational institution whose primary purpose shall be to collect, preserve, and  
17       present, as an educational resource, documents, artifacts, objects of art, and the like,  
18       that reflect the politics, history, art, and culture of Louisiana.

19        §380.163. Operations

20          Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary and in particular the  
21       provisions of R.S. 41:1212, the secretary may enter into contracts and agreements  
22       with any public agency or nonprofit corporation which has been established for the  
23       primary purpose of supporting the programs and activities of the Old Governor's  
24       Mansion for the establishment of offices, stores, or exhibits on the property of and  
25       in the Old Governor's Mansion. The secretary may also enter into contracts and  
26       agreements for joint construction, equipment, maintenance, and financing thereof,  
27       and may enter into contracts and agreements for the joint financing, supervision, and  
28       conduct of cooperative enterprises and undertakings. Any public agency may enter

1 into contracts and agreements with the secretary for the purposes mentioned in this  
2 Section.

3 §380.164. Operating funds

4 A. The legislature shall provide sufficient funds for the proper operation of  
5 the Old Governor's Mansion.

6 B.(1) If sufficient funds necessary for the operation of the Old Governor's  
7 Mansion are not appropriated by the legislature, and funds from other local, public,  
8 or private sources are not available for this purpose, the department may temporarily  
9 close the Old Governor's Mansion to the public until such time as sufficient funds  
10 necessary for the operation of the Old Governor's Mansion are appropriated by the  
11 legislature. The department shall maintain the Old Governor's Mansion during any  
12 period of temporary closure.

13 (2) The department may accept and use, in accordance with law, gifts,  
14 grants, bequests, donations, endowments, or funds from any public or private source  
15 to support operations of the Old Governor's Mansion.

16 §380.165. Donations and loans; disposition of abandoned loans

17 A. The secretary may solicit and accept funds, governmental grants,  
18 donations, and contributions of lands, buildings, monies, relics, works of art, or other  
19 property on behalf of and as additions to the Old Governor's Mansion either in the  
20 form of loans or in the form of donations inter vivos or mortis causa, and the  
21 secretary may acquire them by purchase, lease, or otherwise, subject to the terms,  
22 conditions, or limitations contained in the instrument by which such property is  
23 acquired. However, the secretary shall be empowered and authorized to enter into  
24 any and all contracts with any person, lender, or donor that he may deem fit, proper,  
25 and necessary to accept and receive such lands, buildings, monies, relics, works of  
26 art, or other property on behalf of and as additions to the Old Governor's Mansion.  
27 The Old Governor's Mansion is specifically empowered to serve as the beneficiary  
28 of any public trust heretofore or hereafter created for such purpose pursuant to the  
29 provisions of R.S. 9:2341 through 2347.

1           B. The secretary is granted the authority of deaccession with respect to any  
2           collections of the Old Governor's Mansion and for such purpose is specifically  
3           exempted from the laws of the state relative to the sale or disposal of surplus  
4           property. The secretary shall establish policies and procedures necessary to carry out  
5           this authority in an orderly manner.

6           C.(1) Any property which has been deposited with the Old Governor's  
7           Mansion, by loan or otherwise, and which has been held by the Old Governor's  
8           Mansion for more than ten years, and to which no person has made a claim shall be  
9           deemed to be abandoned and, notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 1 of Title  
10          XII of Book III of the Civil Code, shall become the property of the Old Governor's  
11          Mansion, provided that the secretary of state has published a notice and listing of the  
12          property in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the parish at least once  
13          per week for two consecutive weeks. The notice shall contain:

14               (a) The name and last known address, if any, of the last known owner or  
15               depositor of the property.

16               (b) A description of the property.

17               (c) A statement that if proof of claim is not presented by the owner to the  
18               secretary and if the owner's right to receive such property is not established to the  
19               satisfaction of the secretary within sixty-five days from the date of the second  
20               published notice, the property will be deemed abandoned and shall become the  
21               property of the Old Governor's Mansion.

22               (2) If no valid claim is made to the property within sixty-five days from the  
23               date of the second published notice, title to the property shall vest in the Old  
24               Governor's Mansion free from all claims of the owner and all persons claiming  
25               through or under him.

26               §380.166. Use of collections

27               The collections of the Old Governor's Mansion may be lent in part subject to  
28               approval by the secretary. The secretary shall ensure proper safeguards for their  
29               maintenance and return and shall ensure that proper records are kept.

1 Section 2. R.S. 49:141 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

2 §141. Division of State Buildings; superintendent; duties

3 A. There is created the Division of State Buildings in the office of the  
4 governor which shall be administered by a superintendent of state buildings  
5 appointed by the governor. The superintendent of state buildings shall have charge  
6 of the management, operation, and maintenance of general public buildings of the  
7 state, including ~~both the old and new governor's mansions~~ the new governor's  
8 mansion.

9 ~~B. The Division of State Buildings shall have custody and supervision of~~  
10 ~~maintenance of the Old Governor's Mansion. Title to said property shall remain in~~  
11 ~~the state of Louisiana, along with all buildings and other improvements constructed~~  
12 ~~thereon. The buildings and grounds shall be maintained by the superintendent of~~  
13 ~~state buildings out of regular appropriations made for such purposes.~~

14 ~~C. For purposes of administration and supervision of the Old Governor's~~  
15 ~~Mansion, the commissioner of administration shall have full authority over its~~  
16 ~~grounds and all other buildings and improvements constructed thereon, and shall~~  
17 ~~control any use made thereof and the space therein. He shall have further authority~~  
18 ~~to transfer custody, supervision, and general administrative control for purposes of~~  
19 ~~historic preservation, heritage education, maintenance, protection, and promotion of~~  
20 ~~the building, historical collections, and artifacts and the historical integrity of the site~~  
21 ~~to any public agency or nonprofit corporation with sufficient resources necessary to~~  
22 ~~operate the said facility consistent therewith as its custodian in order to administer~~  
23 ~~and to insure the future of the mansion and the value of its collections; and to honor~~  
24 ~~the relationships and trusts established in the early years with the governors and their~~  
25 ~~families who donated personal items for such purposes, as the said commissioner of~~  
26 ~~administration may deem appropriate, according to the constitution and laws of the~~  
27 ~~state of Louisiana, including R.S. 39:11 et seq.~~

28 Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
29 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature

1 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
2 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
3 effective on the day following such approval.

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## DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HB 576 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Gadberry

**Abstract:** Transfers the Old Governor's Mansion to the Dept. of State.

Present law (R.S. 49:141(A)) creates that Division of State Buildings in the office of the governor. Provides that the division is administered by a superintendent of state buildings appointed by the governor. Provides that the superintendent shall have charge of the management, operation, and maintenance of general public buildings of the state, including both the old and new governor's mansions.

Proposed law removes the Old Governor's Mansion from its inclusion among the general public buildings of the state that are under the jurisdiction of the superintendent of the Division of State Buildings. Otherwise retains present law.

Present law (R.S. 49:141(B)) provides that the Division of State Buildings shall have custody and supervision of maintenance of the Old Governor's Mansion with its buildings and improvements. Provides that the superintendent of state buildings shall maintain the building and grounds with money appropriated by the legislature for such purposes. Proposed law repeals present law.

Present law (R.S. 49:141(C)) provides for the management and control of the property of the Old Governor's Mansion by the commissioner of administration. Authorizes the commissioner to transfer custody, supervision, and general administrative control to any public agency or non-profit corporation with sufficient resources to preserve the mansion and its contents. Proposed law repeals present law.

Proposed law establishes the Old Governor's Mansion under the overall jurisdiction of the Dept. of State. Provides that the secretary of state shall have custody, control, and supervision of maintenance of the building and its contents, including all of its management, functions, programs, and operations. Provides that the secretary shall have full authority over the building's grounds and all other buildings and improvements constructed thereon. Provides that title to the Old Governor's Mansion remains in the State of La., along with all buildings and other improvements constructed thereon.

Proposed law provides that the Old Governor's Mansion shall function as a historical, cultural, and educational institution with a primary purpose to collect, preserve, and present documents, artifacts, and objects of art that reflect the politics, history, art, and culture of La.

Proposed law authorizes the secretary of state to enter into contracts and agreements with public agencies or nonprofit corporations that are established for the primary purpose of supporting the programs and activities of the Old Governor's Mansion for the creation of offices, stores, or exhibits on the property of and within the building. Authorizes the secretary to enter into contracts and agreements for joint construction, equipment, maintenance, and financing thereof, and for the joint financing, supervision, and conduct of

cooperative enterprises and undertakings. Authorizes any public agency to enter into contracts and agreements with the secretary for such purposes.

Proposed law requires the legislature to provide sufficient funds for the proper operation of the Old Governor's Mansion. Authorizes the Dept. of State to temporarily close the building to the public until the legislature is able to appropriate sufficient funds for its operation. Requires the department to maintain the building during any period of temporary closure.

Proposed law authorizes the secretary of state to solicit and accept funds, governmental grants, donations. Authorizes the secretary to accept contributions of lands, buildings, monies, relics, works of art, or other property on behalf of and as additions to the Old Governor's Mansion in the form of loans or donations. Authorizes the secretary to acquire such loans or donations by purchase, lease, or otherwise, subject to the terms, conditions, or limitations contained in the loan or donation agreement by which the property is acquired. Authorizes the secretary to enter into any contracts with any person, lender, or donor that he deems fit, proper, and necessary to accept and receive such property on behalf of and as additions to the Old Governor's Mansion.

Proposed law provides that the Old Governor's Mansion is authorized to serve as the beneficiary of any public trust created pursuant to present law.

Proposed law grants the secretary of state the authority of deaccession with respect to any collections of the Old Governor's Mansion. Exempts the secretary, for such purposes, from the laws of the state relative to the sale or disposal of surplus property. Requires the secretary to establish policies and procedures necessary to carry out this authority.

Proposed law provides a procedure for acquiring property deposited with the Old Governor's Mansion, by loan or otherwise, which has been in its possession for more than 10 years without claim.

Proposed law authorizes, subject to approval by the secretary of state, the collections of the Old Governor's Mansion to be lent in part. Requires the secretary to ensure proper safeguards for the maintenance and return of such collections and to ensure that proper records of such lending are kept.

(Amends R.S. 49:141; Adds R.S. 25:380.161- 380.166)

#### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs to the original bill:

1. Make technical changes.
2. Provide that the title to the Old Governor's Mansion shall remain in the state of La., along with all buildings and other improvements constructed thereon.