

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 405

BY REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT

CONSTITUTION/CONVENTION: Provides for calling a constitutional convention and preparations therefor

1 AN ACT

2 To provide for the calling of a constitutional convention for the purpose of framing a new
3 constitution; to provide for legislative findings; to fix the time and place for the
4 convention; to provide for the qualifications and election and appointment of
5 delegates; to create a constitutional convention Planning and Drafting Committee
6 and provide for preparations and planning for the convention, including a draft of a
7 proposed constitution; to provide for the organization and staff of the convention; to
8 require that the constitution as adopted by the convention, including any alternative
9 provisions, be submitted to the qualified electors for adoption and to provide relative
10 to such submission; to provide for the application of specified laws, including
11 provisions of law containing criminal penalties, to committee members, delegates,
12 candidates for delegate, and staff of the convention; to require appropriation of funds
13 for the convention and provide with respect to convention funds; to fix the effective
14 date of the new constitution if approved by the electorate; to provide for an effective
15 date; and to provide for related matters.

16 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

17 Section 1. Legislative findings. The legislature finds that:

18 (A) It has been more than forty-seven years since the Constitution of Louisiana
19 became effective at midnight on December 31, 1974, and during these years the document
20 which constitutes the state's basic law has been amended some two hundred three times.

1 (B) The need to address a number of key policy areas that require constitutional
2 change has become apparent, including such matters as the state's tax structure and
3 budgetary practices that hamper the state's economic growth and competitiveness as well as
4 the quality of life of Louisiana residents; the dedication of state revenues and the resulting
5 inability of the legislature to allocate resources where needed, particularly for the needs of
6 health care and higher education; the fiscal restraints on local governments that dramatically
7 limit their authority to meet fiscal and budgetary demands; and other matters.

8 (C) The constitution today contains many provisions that restrict the legislature in
9 effectively addressing state and constituent needs, and the document also includes extensive
10 provisions that are so detailed as to be statutory rather than constitutional in nature and, as
11 a result, require further constitutional amendment when any change is needed.

12 (D) A serious analysis and revision of the state constitution is needed if the state is
13 to conduct a genuine examination of the state's critical needs, to undertake an in-depth
14 consideration of reform proposals, and to craft provisions that allow for flexibility and
15 innovation in legislative solutions to problems of the present and the future.

16 Section 2. Planning and Drafting Committee. (A) The Planning and Drafting
17 Committee is hereby created. The purpose of the committee shall be to develop and propose
18 a plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention, including, subject to the
19 limitations provided in Section 6 of this Act, a draft of a proposed constitution with
20 alternative proposals for provisions addressing significant policy areas.

21 (B)(1) The Planning and Drafting Committee shall be composed of twenty-seven
22 members as follows:

23 (a) A member appointed by the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana.

24 (b) A member appointed by the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry.

25 (c) A member appointed by the Committee of 100 for Economic Development.

26 (d) A member appointed by the Louisiana AFL-CIO.

27 (e) A member appointed by the Louisiana Conference of the National Association
28 for the Advancement of Colored People.

29 (f) A representative of elected parish officials appointed with the concurrence of the
30 Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Louisiana Assessors' Association, and the Louisiana
31 Clerks of Court Association.

1 (g) A representative of local governmental bodies appointed with the concurrence
2 of the Louisiana Municipal Association, the Police Jury Association of Louisiana, and the
3 Louisiana School Boards Association.

4 (h) One representative of the Louisiana State Law Institute appointed by the
5 Louisiana State Law Institute.

6 (i) A representative of the Louisiana State University system appointed by the Board
7 of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.

8 (j) A representative of the Southern University system appointed by the Board of
9 Supervisors of Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.

10 (k) A representative of the University of Louisiana System appointed by the Board
11 of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana system.

12 (l) One member appointed by the Council for a Better Louisiana.

13 (m) A representative of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation appointed by the
14 Louisiana Farm Bureau board of directors.

15 (n) One member appointed with the concurrence of the Louisiana District Judges
16 Association, the Conference of Court of Appeal Judges, and the chief justice of the
17 Louisiana Supreme Court.

18 (o) Four members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

19 (p) Four members appointed by the president of the Senate.

20 (q) Four members appointed by the governor.

21 (r) One representative of the Louisiana Tax Institute appointed by the board of the
22 Louisiana Tax Institute.

23 (2) The appointments required by this Subsection shall be made and shall be
24 submitted to the secretary of state not later than August 1, 2022. Not later than August 8,
25 2022, the secretary of state shall provide each member appointed with a list of the
26 membership appointed to the committee. The secretary of state shall issue a commission to
27 each person appointed as provided in this Section.

28 (3) The committee shall hold its organizational meeting not later than September 8,
29 2022, on the call of the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president of the
30 Senate acting jointly. The committee shall elect a chairman, a vice chairman, and such other
31 officers as it shall find necessary.

1 (4) Any vacancy in the membership of the committee shall be filled in the manner
2 of the original appointment.

3 (C) The committee shall have the following powers and duties:

4 (1) The committee shall prepare a plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional
5 convention. Such plan shall include but not be limited to:

6 (a) A policy agenda for the convention which shall include:

7 (i) Identification of significant policy areas that must be addressed in order to
8 propose a constitution that will serve the state effectively.

9 (ii) Subject to the limitations provided in Section 6 of this Act, a draft of a proposed
10 constitution for the state, including provisions addressing significant policy areas identified
11 as well as all other provisions necessary for an effective constitution.

12 (iii) Materials explaining the proposed provisions addressing significant policy areas
13 and the reasons therefor.

14 (iv) Alternative proposals for provisions addressing significant policy areas, together
15 with explanations and explanatory materials therefor. The committee shall include multiple
16 optional approaches and solutions as appropriate to facilitate the work of the convention in
17 addressing issues.

18 (v) Pertinent background material and data relative to significant policy areas.

19 (b) Background and other materials that the committee determines will be useful to
20 the work of the convention.

21 (c) Proposals for elimination of statutory materials from the constitution, together
22 with recommendations for legislative action relative thereto.

23 (d) Recommendations for convention organization and deliberations, including
24 significant provisions for rules of procedure.

25 (e) Recommendations for budget needs for effective conduct of a convention.

26 (f) Recommendations for procedures for submission of alternative proposals to the
27 voters and ballot structure.

28 (2) The committee shall undertake all necessary study and analysis to complete such
29 plan and submit such plan to the legislature as required by this Section.

1 (D) The committee may create or appoint advisory committees or task forces to act
2 in an advisory capacity or to assist in its studies, composed of such representatives of the
3 public or private sectors as it deems appropriate.

4 (E)(1) As soon as possible after the members of the Planning and Drafting
5 Committee have been appointed, the committee shall request the provision of staff necessary
6 to assist it in completing its duties on a timely basis. Such staff may include:

7 (a) Such professional, research, and other employees as the committee shall deem
8 necessary to carry out its duties.

9 (b) Personnel provided by the Louisiana State University, Southern University,
10 Tulane University, and Loyola University law schools from the faculty as requested by the
11 committee.

12 (2) In addition, to assist the committee in its work, the committee may utilize the
13 personnel, facilities, and services of the legislative auditor, the legislative fiscal officer, and
14 the staffs of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the committee may request
15 and utilize such counsel, assistance, personnel, facilities, and advice as may be obtained
16 from any and all public sources and from any and all private sources, including but not
17 necessarily restricted to universities, colleges, foundations, charitable corporations, private
18 research agencies, individuals, and organizations.

19 (3) The committee may call upon the members or staffs of any and all departments
20 or agencies of the state for data and assistance, and all such departments and agencies shall
21 cooperate with the committee.

22 (F) The committee shall submit to the legislature its plan for the conduct of an
23 effective constitutional convention as provided in Paragraph (C)(1) of this Section. The
24 committee shall complete its work and make the submission to the legislature required by
25 this Section no later than February 27, 2023. The committee shall submit a copy of such
26 report to the governor. When the constitutional convention convenes as provided in Section
27 3 of this Act, the committee shall submit a copy of the plan to the convention.

28 (G)(1) The committee may accept grants, donations, gifts, monies, aid, facilities,
29 and services from public or private sources for the purpose of completing its work and
30 preparing and submitting the plan for the conduct of the constitutional convention as
31 required by this Section. Any such grants, monies, facilities, services, and donations, as well

1 as the names of the donors thereof, shall be recorded in the records of the proceedings of the
2 committee and of the convention, and such records shall be open to inspection by any
3 person.

4 (2) The members of the Planning and Drafting Committee shall be subject to the
5 same limitation on compensation for committee work as provided in Section 9 of this Act
6 for convention work by convention delegates.

7 (3) Expenses incurred by the committee may be paid from any funds available for
8 the purpose and, with the approval of the presiding officers of the two houses of the
9 Louisiana Legislature, from funds available to such presiding officers for expenses of the
10 legislature.

11 (H) Legislative committee rooms in the state capitol shall be available for use by the
12 committee, unless required for legislative committee meetings. In addition, the committee
13 may use the facilities and services of any board, commission, department, or agency of the
14 state or of any political subdivision of the state, and all such entities shall cooperate with the
15 committee to the fullest extent in furnishing services and facilities upon request. In addition,
16 the committee may use the facilities and services of other persons and organizations.

17 (I) The Planning and Drafting Committee shall be dissolved thirty days after
18 submission of a copy of the plan for the conduct of the constitutional convention to the
19 convention, except that if a different termination date is provided in the rules of the
20 convention, the Planning and Drafting Committee shall be dissolved on that date.

21 Section 3. Call for convention; delegates. (A) A constitutional convention is hereby
22 called, to convene on July 8, 2024, at noon, which shall be held for the purpose of framing
23 a new constitution for the state of Louisiana subject to the terms, conditions, and provisions
24 in this Act.

25 (B)(1) There shall be one hundred thirty-two delegates to the convention, as follows:

26 (a) One delegate shall be elected from each of the districts from which members of
27 the House of Representatives of the Louisiana Legislature are elected in 2023.

28 (b) The twenty-seven members of the constitutional convention Planning and
29 Drafting Committee, appointed as provided in Section 2 of this Act, shall be delegates to the
30 convention.

1 (2) The secretary of state shall issue a commission to each delegate selected as
2 provided in this Section.

3 (3)(a) Each delegate to the convention shall be an elector of the state of Louisiana,
4 shall be at least eighteen years of age, and shall be a resident of the state of Louisiana. In
5 addition, each delegate elected from a representative district shall be a resident of the district
6 from which he is elected at the time he qualifies as a candidate for election as a delegate.

7 (b) No member of the legislature shall be eligible to serve as a delegate.

8 (4) The election or appointment of any public official or public employee as a
9 delegate to the convention and his service in the convention or as a member of the Planning
10 and Drafting Committee and his service on the committee and the appointment of any public
11 official or public employee to the staff of the convention or the staff of the Planning and
12 Drafting Committee and his service on such staff, as authorized and provided in this Act,
13 shall not be construed to constitute dual officeholding or dual employment within the
14 prohibitions of Part III of Chapter 2 of Title 42 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950.
15 Each appointed and elected delegate and each member of the Planning and Drafting
16 Committee shall be considered to be an elected official within the scope of and subject to
17 the provisions of the Code of Governmental Ethics, Chapter 15 of Title 42 of the Louisiana
18 Revised Statutes of 1950. Each staff member of the convention or of the Planning and
19 Drafting Committee shall be considered to be a public employee within the scope of and
20 subject to the provisions of the Code of Governmental Ethics, Chapter 15 of Title 42 of the
21 Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950. For purposes of Chapter 15 of Title 42 of the Louisiana
22 Revised Statutes of 1950, the agency and the governmental entity of delegates and staff
23 members of the convention shall be the convention, and the agency and the governmental
24 entity of members and staff members of the Planning and Drafting Committee shall be both
25 the committee and the convention. For purposes of any other office or employment of any
26 such delegate, committee member, or staff member, the provisions of Chapter 15 of Title 42
27 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950 shall remain applicable. Each delegate to the
28 convention, each member of the Planning and Drafting Committee, and each staff member
29 of the convention or of the Planning and Drafting Committee shall be considered to be a
30 public officer, public official, public employee, or person in a position of public authority
31 for purposes of the application of the provisions of the Louisiana Criminal Code.

1 (5) Each candidate for election as a delegate to the constitutional convention and
2 each elected delegate is subject to the provisions of the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act
3 and the office of delegate shall be a district office for the purposes of that Act.

4 (6) Any attorney at law serving as a delegate to the convention shall be entitled to
5 the absolute right of the continuance of any case in which he is bona fide counsel of record
6 in any court of the state during his attendance upon the sessions and work of the convention.

7 (C)(1) The one hundred five delegates to the convention to be elected from
8 representative districts shall be elected at a special election to be held as provided in this Act.
9 The special primary election for such delegates shall be held at the primary election on
10 October 14, 2023, and, if necessary, the special general election for delegates shall be held
11 at the general election to be held on November 18, 2023. The governor shall issue a
12 proclamation and give notice of the election to be held under this Section not later than July
13 11, 2023. Each person desiring to become a candidate for election as a delegate from a
14 representative district shall qualify as a candidate from the particular representative district
15 he seeks to represent by filing a statement of candidacy with the clerk of court for the parish
16 in which the candidate is registered to vote during the qualifying period for candidates in the
17 primary election on October 14, 2023, as otherwise provided by law. Qualification as a
18 candidate shall be without regard to party affiliation. Notwithstanding R.S. 18:453 or 461, a
19 person may qualify for one delegate position and one other office other than delegate, unless
20 the other office is for the state legislature.

21 (2) The election of a person to the office of delegate shall be in accordance with
22 provisions for the election of candidates for public office in the Louisiana Election Code.

23 Section 4. Conduct of election for elected delegates. (A) Except as otherwise
24 provided in this Act, the primary and general elections for convention delegates shall be
25 conducted and the results thereof published and promulgated in accordance with the
26 Louisiana Election Code. All qualified electors shall be entitled to vote in their respective
27 election precincts without regard to party affiliation. The votes for candidates for the office
28 of delegate shall be tabulated as in the case of candidates for public office.

29 (B) The costs of the elections authorized by this Act for election of delegates shall
30 be paid as provided by the Louisiana Election Code for payment of costs of elections in
31 which a candidate for the state legislature appears on the ballot.

1 (C) All offenses, prosecutions, penalties, and punishments arising out of or in
2 connection with the elections required by this Act shall be governed by the applicable laws
3 of the state.

4 Section 5. Vacancies. In the event of the death or the inability or unwillingness of
5 any elected delegate to serve, whether before or during the convention, the speaker of the
6 House of Representatives, the president of the Senate, and the governor shall fill such
7 vacancy by appointment, by unanimous consent of the three officials, of a person from the
8 same district who possesses the qualifications for delegate. In the event of the death or the
9 inability or unwillingness to serve of any other delegate, the vacancy shall be filled in the
10 same manner as the original selection within thirty days after the vacancy.

11 Section 6.(A) The convention shall have authority to frame a new constitution for
12 the state, including such alternative provisions as it deems appropriate, which shall be
13 submitted to the electors of the state for their approval or rejection.

14 (B) The convention shall have full authority to propose substantive changes,
15 including one or more alternative provisions, with respect to all matters contained in the
16 Constitution of Louisiana of 1974, as amended, except as provided in Paragraph C of this
17 Section.

18 (C) The convention shall not propose any changes that will:

19 (a) Change or affect Article I of the constitution, entitled "Declaration of Rights",
20 in any way.

21 (b) Cause any bonded or other indebtedness of the state or of any parish,
22 municipality, district, or other political subdivision or authority of the state to be impaired.

23 (c) Cause the term of office of any elected official of the state or of any political
24 subdivision thereof to be reduced or shortened prior to the expiration of the term of office
25 being held at the time of the adoption of the new constitution, or cause the salary of any such
26 official to be reduced prior to the expiration of the term of office being held at the time of
27 the adoption of a new constitution.

28 (d) Remove or permit the removal of the state capital from Baton Rouge.

29 (D) In addition to the authority to propose substantive changes as provided in
30 Subsection (B) of this Section, the convention may incorporate in its proposed revision or
31 in any alternative provision nonsubstantive changes for the purposes of orderly arrangement,

1 style and conformity. For the same purposes, the convention may: (1) renumber or rearrange
2 provisions, (2) transfer or divide provisions, (3) change reference designations to conform
3 to redesignated provisions, and (4) make any other purely formal or clerical changes in
4 keeping with the purpose of the revision.

5 (E) Any action by the convention in contravention of the provisions of this Section
6 shall be null and void and of no effect.

7 (F) Any action to determine a question of the construction or validity of this Act, to
8 determine the scope of authority of the convention, or to determine the conformity of any
9 action of the convention with the provisions of this Act shall be brought in the Nineteenth
10 Judicial District Court. The matter shall be tried by preference over other matters and the
11 court shall render a decision as soon as practicable. In the event of an appeal, the appellate
12 court shall place the matter on its preferential docket, shall hear it without delay, and shall
13 render a decision as soon as practicable.

14 Section 7. Convention organization. (A)(1) The delegates to the convention chosen
15 as provided in this Act shall meet in the House Chamber in the state capitol, or at such other
16 suitable location in the capital city as shall be determined jointly by the presiding officers
17 of the legislature, at noon on July 8, 2024. The chief justice, or in his absence any associate
18 justice of the supreme court designated by the court, shall attend the convention at the
19 opening thereof and shall preside until the chairman has been elected. The secretary of state
20 shall attend the opening of the convention and call the roll of the delegates, whereupon the
21 temporary presiding officer shall administer to the delegates the following oath:

22 "I, . . . , do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the constitution and laws of
23 the United States and the constitution and laws of this state and that I will faithfully and
24 impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent on me as a delegate to the
25 convention, according to the best of my ability and understanding, and that I will observe
26 and obey the limitation of authority contained in the Act under which this convention has
27 assembled. So help me God."

28 (2) No delegate shall be qualified to serve as such unless and until he has taken and
29 subscribed to the oath in Paragraph (1) of this Subsection.

30 (B) After the oath has been administered, the delegates shall proceed to effect the
31 permanent organization of the convention and shall:

1 (1) Adopt rules of procedure for the convention, which rules shall not be inconsistent
2 with the provisions of this Act.

3 (2) Elect from among their number a chairman, a vice chairman, and such other
4 officers as they deem necessary.

5 (3) Elect from among their number an executive committee, the membership of
6 which shall be determined by the delegates but which shall include among its members all
7 of the elected officers of the convention.

8 (4) Select a chief clerical officer of the convention from among the chief clerical
9 officers of the House of Representatives and the Senate and their assistants, who shall not
10 be a delegate and whose duties shall be provided by the rules of procedure for the
11 convention.

12 (5) Take such other actions as they deem necessary to effect a permanent
13 organization of the convention.

14 (C) Prior to the convening of the convention, members of the House of
15 Representatives and Senate staffs as designated by the presiding officers of the legislature
16 shall prepare a draft of rules of procedure for consideration, amendment, and adoption by
17 the convention when it convenes. Such proposed rules shall be based upon the rules of the
18 constitutional convention convened in 1973, except as inconsistent with the provisions of
19 this Act. The rules of procedure adopted by the convention shall be subject to later change
20 as the delegates shall provide therein. No delegate shall be allowed to vote by proxy and the
21 rules shall so provide. No committee of the convention, including the executive committee,
22 shall exceed seventeen members and the rules shall so provide.

23 (D) After completing organizational activities, the convention may meet either as
24 a full body or in committees until it completes its duties as provided in this Act.

25 Section 8. Staff; budget; committees. (A) As soon as possible after the members
26 of the executive committee are elected, the executive committee shall request the provision
27 of professional, research, technical, and clerical employees from any public or private
28 sources the committee deems necessary to accomplish the work of the convention.

29 (B) The staff of the constitutional convention may include but shall not be limited
30 to the following who shall not be delegates to the convention:

1 (1) A director of research who shall possess such qualifications as determined by the
2 committee.

3 (2) Research assistants in such number and possessing such qualifications as
4 determined by the committee.

5 (3) Personnel provided by the Louisiana State University, Tulane University, Loyola
6 University, and Southern University law schools from the faculty as requested by the
7 committee.

8 (4) Such other staff as the executive committee deems necessary.

9 (C) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, if a staff member provided
10 to the Planning and Drafting Committee or to the convention is engaged in regular, bona fide
11 employment, the staff member may continue to be paid and receive the usual compensation
12 and benefits from his employer while the staff member is engaged in the work of the
13 committee or the convention.

14 (D) As soon as possible after the members of the executive committee are elected,
15 the executive committee shall prepare a budget of anticipated expenses of the convention
16 based on the amount of the appropriation for the convention and any other funds available
17 for expenditure.

18 (E) The executive committee may create and establish such substantive and
19 procedural committees as it deems appropriate. The chairman of the convention shall
20 appoint the chairman, vice chairman, and the membership of each such committee.

21 (F) Unless the legislature is in session, the House chamber, the Senate chamber, and
22 the legislative committee rooms in the state capitol shall be available for use by the
23 convention and its committees. If the facilities at the state capitol are not available or are
24 not sufficient for use by the convention or its committees, the convention or its committees
25 shall meet at a suitable location in the capital city, which location shall be determined by the
26 chairman of the convention, and public notice of the location shall be given and posted at
27 suitable locations in the state capitol. The convention shall have full authority to use the
28 facilities and services of any board, commission, department, or agency of the state or of any
29 political subdivision of the state, and all such entities shall cooperate with the convention to
30 the fullest extent in furnishing services, facilities, and employees upon request. In addition,
31 the convention may use the facilities and services of other persons and organizations.

1 (G) The convention shall have full authority to accept grants, monies, aid, facilities,
2 and services from public or private sources for the purpose of accomplishing its task of
3 framing a new constitution. Any such grants, monies, facilities, services, and donations, as
4 well as the names of the donors thereof, shall be recorded in the record of the proceedings
5 of the convention, and such records shall be open to inspection by any person.

6 Section 9. Compensation of delegates. No delegate may accept any compensation
7 from any source for work performed as a delegate to the convention. However, if a delegate
8 is engaged in regular, bona fide employment, should the delegate's employer choose to
9 continue to pay the usual compensation while the delegate is engaged in the work of the
10 convention, such delegate may accept that compensation, notwithstanding any provision of
11 law to the contrary.

12 Section 10. Appropriation; use of funds. (A) Any appropriation for the expenses
13 of the convention shall be used solely to defray the necessary expenses of the constitutional
14 convention for which provision is made in this Act, including the payment for supplies,
15 materials, equipment, printing, and reproduction of materials, and all other necessary
16 expenses incurred in connection with the convention and its work.

17 (B) Any funds appropriated for the convention shall be withdrawn from the state
18 treasury in accordance with warrants signed by the chairman of the convention, and all
19 checks for the disbursement of funds shall be signed by the chairman and the vice chairman
20 of the convention or by the chairman or vice chairman and such other person as shall be
21 designated by the convention.

22 (C) The legislature shall make adequate appropriations to the convention for so long
23 as the convention remains in existence and for so long thereafter as is necessary to assure
24 the payment of all expenses incurred in connection with the work of the convention. The
25 convention shall not be deemed to be a budget unit of the state and therefore shall not be
26 subject to the provisions of Chapter 1 of Title 39 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950.
27 The financial books and records of the convention, however, shall be subject to audit by the
28 legislative auditor.

29 Section 11. Submission of proposed constitution; election. (A) Upon completion
30 of its work, and not later than June 1, 2026, and subject to the limitations provided in Section
31 6 of this Act, the convention shall submit a proposed draft of a new constitution for the state

1 to the governor. At the discretion of the convention, but subject to the limitations provided
2 in Section 6 of this Act, the convention may also propose and submit at the same time such
3 alternative provisions as it deems appropriate. The constitution as drafted by the convention,
4 together with any alternative provisions proposed for submission, shall be submitted to the
5 people for adoption or rejection. Within fifteen days after submission of the proposed draft
6 to the governor, he shall by proclamation call an election to be held at the same time as the
7 congressional primary election in 2026 for the purpose of submitting the proposed draft and
8 any alternative provisions to the people for adoption or rejection.

9 (B) The election shall be held and the results shall be promulgated in accordance
10 with the Louisiana Election Code. All electors duly qualified to vote in the state at the time
11 of the election shall be entitled to vote without regard to party affiliation in their respective
12 precincts on the proposition for or against adoption of the revision and on the question or
13 questions of adoption of such alternative provisions as may be proposed by the convention.
14 The costs of the election shall be paid as provided in the Louisiana Election Code for
15 elections in which a constitutional amendment appears on the ballot.

16 (C) The convention may submit to the electors of the state the proposal of
17 acceptance or rejection of the constitution and any alternative provisions in such form and
18 manner as it may determine and may direct the proper election officials to take the necessary
19 steps to effectuate such determination of the convention in presenting the proposed
20 constitution and any alternative provisions to the electors. Adoption of the constitution and
21 of any such alternative provisions shall require the favorable vote of a majority of the
22 electors voting on the respective proposition.

23 (D) Upon promulgation of the results of the election by the secretary of state, if the
24 constitution is ratified and adopted by the people in the election for which provision is made
25 in this Section, the governor shall proclaim the constitution, including such alternative
26 provisions as are adopted by the people at the election, to be the Constitution of Louisiana.
27 The constitution, including such alternative provisions as are so adopted, shall become
28 effective at midnight on December 31, 2026, except as otherwise provided in the constitution
29 adopted or in any such alternative provisions adopted.

30 Section 12. If any provision or application of this Act that prohibits the convention
31 from considering specified subject matters and provisions is held invalid, including without

1 limitation any provision of Section 6 of this Act, then this entire Act shall be invalid and of
 2 no effect. However, if any other provision of this Act or the application thereof is held
 3 invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can
 4 be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

5 Section 13. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
 6 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
 7 by the governor, as provided in Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
 8 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
 9 effective on the day following such approval.

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)]

HB 405 Original

2022 Regular Session

Wright

Abstract: Calls a constitutional convention preceded by plan for the convention and a draft proposed constitution by an Planning and Drafting Committee. Calls convention to convene on July 8, 2024, to be composed of 132 delegates, 105 elected from representative districts and 27 appointed. Requires convention to complete a new constitution by June 1, 2026.

Proposed law states legislative findings that there is a need to address a number of key policy areas that require constitutional change, that the constitution restricts the legislature in effectively addressing state and constituent needs, and that a serious analysis and revision of the state constitution is needed to conduct an examination of the state's critical needs, to consider reform proposals, and to craft provisions that allow legislative solutions.

Planning and Drafting Committee

Proposed law creates the Planning and Drafting Committee. Provides that its purpose is to develop and propose a plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention, including a draft of a proposed constitution with alternative provisions, subject to subject matter limitations applicable to the convention. (See Constitutional Convention section below.)

- (1) Provides that the committee is composed of 27 members to be appointed by August 1, 2022, as follows:
 - (a) A member appointed by the Public Affairs Research Council of La..
 - (b) A member appointed by the La. Association of Business and Industry.
 - (c) A member appointed by the Committee of 100 for Economic Development.
 - (d) A member appointed by the La. AFL-CIO.
 - (e) A member appointed by the La. Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

- (f) A representative of elected parish officials appointed with the concurrence of the La. Sheriffs' Association, the La. Assessors' Association, and the La. Clerks of Court Association.
 - (g) A representative of local governmental bodies appointed with the concurrence of the La. Municipal Association, the Police Jury Association of La., and the La. School Boards Association.
 - (h) One representative of the La. State Law Institute appointed by the La. State Law Institute.
 - (i) A representative of the La. State University system appointed by the Board of Supervisors of La. State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.
 - (j) A representative of the Southern University system appointed by Board of Supervisors of Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.
 - (k) A representative of the University of La. System appointed by the Board of Supervisors for the University of La. system.
 - (l) One member appointed by the Council for a Better Louisiana.
 - (m) A representative of the La. Farm Bureau Federation appointed by the La. Farm Bureau board of directors.
 - (n) One member appointed with the concurrence of the La. District Judges Association, the Conference of Court of Appeal Judges, and the chief justice of the La. Supreme Court.
 - (o) Four members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.
 - (p) Four members appointed by the president of the Senate.
 - (q) Four members appointed by the governor.
 - (r) One representative of the La. Tax Institute appointed by the board of the La. Tax Institute.
- (2) Requires the committee to hold its organizational meeting not later than Sept. 8, 2022, and elect a chairman, a vice chairman, and other officers it finds necessary. Provides for filling of committee vacancies in the manner of the original appointments.
- (3) Requires the committee to prepare a plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention, such plan to include:
- (a) A policy agenda for the convention which shall include (subject to subject matter limitations on the convention described below): identification of significant policy areas to be addressed; a draft of a proposed constitution, including provisions addressing significant policy areas and other necessary provisions; materials explaining the significant policy issue proposals; alternative proposals on significant policy areas, together with explanations and explanatory materials (to include multiple optional approaches and solutions); and pertinent background material and data on significant policy areas.
 - (b) Background and other materials useful to the convention.
 - (c) Proposals for elimination of statutory materials and recommendations for legislative action relative thereto.

- (d) Recommendations for convention organization and deliberations, including significant rules of procedure.
 - (e) Recommendations for convention budget needs.
 - (f) Recommendations for procedures for submission of alternative proposals to the voters and ballot structure.
- (4) Authorizes the committee to create or appoint advisory committees or task forces to advise or assist in its studies, composed of representatives of the public or private sectors.
 - (5) Requires the Planning and Drafting Committee to request the provision of staff including any professional, research, and other employees necessary to accomplish its duties timely; and personnel provided by the LSU, Southern University, Tulane University, and Loyola University law schools from the faculty as requested by the committee. Authorizes the committee to use personnel, facilities, and services of the legislative auditor, the legislative fiscal officer, and the staffs of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and to request and utilize counsel, assistance, personnel, facilities, and advice from public and private sources. Authorizes the committee to call upon the members or staffs of state departments or agencies for data and assistance and requires them to cooperate with the committee.
 - (6) Requires the committee to complete its work and submit to the legislature by Feb. 27, 2023, its plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention. Requires that a copy of such report be submitted to the governor and to the constitutional convention when it convenes.
 - (7) Authorizes the committee to accept grants, donations, gifts, monies, aid, facilities, and services from public or private sources which shall be recorded with donor names in the records of the committee and the convention and shall be open to inspection by any person.
 - (8) Makes committee members subject to the same limitations on other compensation as provided for convention delegates. (See Constitutional Convention section below). Provides that expenses of the committee may be paid from any funds available for the purpose and, with the approval of the presiding officers of the two houses of the La. Legislature, from funds available for expenses of the legislature.
 - (9) Requires that legislative committee rooms in the state capitol be available for committee use, unless required for legislative committee meetings. Permits the committee to use facilities and services of any state or local department or agency and requires that they cooperate by furnishing services and facilities upon request. Also authorizes the committee to use the facilities and services of other persons and organizations.
 - (10) Provides that the Planning and Drafting Committee shall be dissolved 30 days after submission of the plan for the conduct of the constitutional convention to the convention unless a different termination date is provided in convention rules.

Constitutional Convention

Proposed law provides for a constitutional convention as follows:

- (1) Calls the convention to convene at noon on July 8, 2024, to frame a new constitution for the state, subject to the terms, conditions, and provisions of proposed law.
- (2) Provides for 132 delegates as follows:
 - (a) 105 delegates to be elected from House of Representatives 2023 election districts at the regularly scheduled gubernatorial elections in 2023.
 - (b) 27 delegates who shall be the members of the Planning and Drafting Committee (see above).

- (3) Requires that delegates be qualified electors of the state and that elected delegates be residents of the district from which elected. Prohibits legislators from serving as delegates. Prohibits candidates for the state legislature from also qualifying as a candidate for convention delegate. Excepts selection and service of members and staff of the Planning and Drafting Committee and delegates and staff of the convention from dual employment/dual officeholding laws. Members of the Planning and Drafting Committee, delegates, and staff are subject to the code of ethics, and, in the case of elected delegates and candidates for delegate, the campaign finance laws. Further, members of the Planning and Drafting Committee, delegates, and staff are considered public officers, public officials, public employees, or person in a position of public authority for purposes of the application of the provisions of the La. Criminal code. Attorney delegates are entitled to continuance of cases in which they are counsel of record while attending sessions and convention work.
- (4) Provides that the election for delegates shall be held at the primary election on Oct. 14, 2023, and if a general election is necessary, on Nov. 18, 2023. Candidates qualify without regard to party affiliation. Election is to be in accordance with provisions for election of candidates for public office in the La. Election Code.
- (5) Provides for conduct of the elections in accordance with the election code, except for any conflicts with proposed law. Voters vote without regard to party affiliation. Provides for application of state law to tabulation of votes in delegates' election. Provides for election costs to be paid as provided by the La. Election Code as in the case of elections for the state legislature.
- (6) Provides for filling of vacancies in elected delegates' offices by joint appointment by the governor, the speaker of the House, and the president of the Senate of a qualified person from the same district. Provides for filling other vacancies in the same manner as the original selection within 30 days of vacancy.

Proposed law grants to the convention the authority to frame a new state constitution, including such alternative provisions as it deems appropriate. Prohibits the convention from proposing any changes that will:

- (1) Change or affect Article I (Declaration of Rights) in any way.
- (2) Cause indebtedness of the state or of any parish, municipality, district, or other political subdivision or authority to be impaired.
- (3) Cause the term of office of state or local elected officials to be reduced prior to the expiration of the term held at the time of the adoption of the new constitution, or cause the salary of any such official to be reduced prior to the expiration of such term.
- (4) Remove or permit the removal of the state capital from Baton Rouge.

Further permits the convention to: (1) renumber or rearrange provisions, (2) transfer or divide provisions, (3) change reference designations to conform to redesignated provisions, and (4) make any other purely formal or clerical changes in keeping with the purpose of the revision.

Provides that any action by the convention in contravention of the provisions relative to substantive restrictions shall be null and void and of no effect. Provides the procedure for judicial determination of the scope of the authority of the convention, questions relating to the construction and validity of the Act, or conformity of any action of the convention with the provisions of the Act and also provides for expedited hearings and decisions.

Proposed law provides for convention organization:

- (1) Includes provisions for oath for delegates; adoption of rules; election of chairman, vice chairman, chief clerical officer, and other officers deemed necessary by the

convention; and election of an executive committee which shall include all of the elected officers of the convention; and other actions necessary to organize.

- (2) Provides for House and Senate staff designated by the presiding officers of the legislature, prior to the convention, to prepare rules of procedure for adoption by the convention, based on the 1973 convention rules, such rules to be subject to change and adoption by the convention. Prohibits proxy voting. Limits committee membership to 17 members.

Proposed law provides for the initial meeting of the convention on July 8, 2024. Provides that after organizational activities are completed, the convention may meet either as a full body or in committees until it completes its duties.

Proposed law provides for convention staff, budget, committees, meeting site, and other assistance:

- (1) Requires the executive committee to request the provision of professional, research, technical, and clerical staff from public or private sources as deemed necessary.
- (2) Provides that staff may include but not be limited to a research director, research assistants, personnel provided by the four law schools from the faculty as requested by the committee, and such other staff as deemed necessary by the executive committee. Allows the staff of the convention and of the Planning and Drafting Committee to continue to receive compensation from the staff person's regular bona fide employment.
- (3) Requires the executive committee to prepare a budget of anticipated expenses of the convention, based on the amount of the appropriation for the convention and any other funds available for expenditure.
- (4) Authorizes the executive committee to establish any substantive or procedural committees it deems necessary. Provides that the chairman of the convention appoint the chairman, vice chairman, and membership of each such committee.
- (5) Requires that the House Chamber and the legislative committee rooms in the state capitol be available for convention use, unless the legislature is in session. Authorizes the convention to meet elsewhere in Baton Rouge as determined by the chairman when state capitol facilities are not available or are insufficient.
- (6) Authorizes convention use of facilities and services of state departments and agencies and of political subdivisions and requires their cooperation in furnishing services, facilities, and employees. Authorizes the convention to accept grants, facilities, and services from public and private sources, with such to be recorded in convention records which shall be open for inspection.

Proposed law provides for compensation of delegates and payment of convention expenses:

- (1) Prohibits a delegate from accepting any compensation for work performed as a delegate to the convention, but allows a delegate to continue to receive compensation for the delegate's regular bona fide employment while a delegate.
- (2) Requires that the legislature make adequate appropriations to the convention for the payment of the necessary expenses of the convention such as supplies, materials, equipment, and printing for so long as the convention remains in existence and for so long thereafter as is necessary to pay the expenses of the convention. Provides that the convention is not a state budget unit. Specifies that the convention is subject to audit by the legislative auditor.
- (3) Requires that funds appropriated be withdrawn from the state treasury in accordance with warrants signed by the convention chairman and that checks be signed by the

chairman and vice chairman, or the chairman or vice chairman and such other person as designated by the convention.

Submission to Voters/Effectiveness

Proposed law requires the convention, upon completion of its work and subject to the subject matter limitations on the convention, to submit to the governor the proposed constitution and any alternative provisions agreed upon completion by June 1, 2026. Provides that the constitution and any alternative provisions proposed for submission shall be submitted to the people for their adoption or rejection at a special election. Provides for the convention to determine the manner for submission of alternative proposals. Requires the governor to call the election within 15 days after the draft is submitted, to be held at the same time as the congressional primary in 2026 (Nov. 3, 2026). Provides for the election to be held and the results thereof promulgated in accordance with the La. Election Code and for costs to be paid as provided in the election code for elections in which a constitutional amendment appears on the ballot. Voters are allowed to vote without regard to party affiliation. Requires a majority vote to approve the constitution and any alternative proposals.

Proposed law, requires, upon promulgation of the results of the election by the secretary of state if the constitution is ratified and adopted by the people, that the governor proclaim the constitution, including alternative provisions adopted, to be the Constitution of La. Provides that the constitution and any such alternative provisions adopted shall become effective at midnight on Dec. 31, 2026, except as otherwise provided in the constitution or in any alternative provisions adopted.

Proposed law provides that if any provision or application of the Act which authorizes the convention to consider only certain subject matters and certain provisions of the constitution and prohibits the convention from considering other subject matters and provisions is held invalid then this entire Act shall be invalid and of no effect. Specifies, however, that if any other provision of this Act or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

Timetable for Major Provisions of Bill

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>
Planning & Drafting Committee members appointed by	8/1/22
Planning & Drafting Committee organizational meeting by	9/8/22
Planning & Drafting Committee to complete work by	2/27/23
Dissolution of Planning and Drafting Committee	30 days after submission of plan to the convention (or other date in convention rules)
Election of 105 convention delegates	10/14/23 & 11/18/23
Convention to convene	7/8/2024 (noon)
Convention to submit draft constitution to the governor by	6/1/2026
Election for submission of proposed constitution	11/3/26 (Congressional primary election)
Constitution becomes effective if adopted	12/31/26 (midnight)