

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 588

BY REPRESENTATIVES MENA AND BOYD

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

TRANSPORTATION: Provides relative to the Regional Transit Authority

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 48:1655(A)(1)(c)(ii) and (2) and (I)(1) and (2), 1656(23), and
3 1656.1(B)(3), (C)(2) and (4) and (5), (D), and (E) and to repeal R.S. 48:1656(24)
4 through (26), relative to the Regional Transit Authority; to provide for the
5 membership of the board of commissioners; to provide for certain powers and
6 authority of the board; to require transit-specific training for members added to the
7 board; to require a minimum of ten meetings per year for board members; to provide
8 for voting and quorum; and to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 48:1655(A)(1)(c)(ii) and (2) and (I)(1) and (2), 1656(23), and
11 1656.1(B)(3), (C)(2) and (4) and (5), (D), and (E) are hereby amended and reenacted to read
12 as follows:

13 §1655. Board of commissioners; membership; terms

14 A.(1) The board of commissioners of the authority shall be composed of
15 three members from each participating parish appointed by the chief executive
16 officer of that parish, subject to the approval of its governing authority, one member
17 appointed by the New Orleans City Council, one member appointed from House
18 District 102 by the state representative representing the district beginning on
19 September 1, 2024, and this appointment shall rotate every four years thereafter
20 between the member appointed from the house district and a member appointed from

Senate District 7 by the state senator representing the district, and two members appointed by the chief executive officer of the parish with the greatest percentage of public transit revenue operating miles from recommendations of the legislative delegation of that parish as follows:

* * *

(c)

* * *

(ii) If any participating parish opts out of the Regional Transit Authority after August 1, 2024, the ~~mayor~~ chief executive officer of the parish or governing authority shall have the power to appoint two new members to the board.

(2) Each member appointed by the chief executive officer of a parish shall be domiciled within the parish. Further, each member appointed to the authority ~~by the parish legislator~~ shall possess the minimum transit expertise standards and ~~required training and previous union experience~~ commit to completing at least two hours of transit-specific training either before taking office or no later than one year after the office is assumed. The transit minimum standards shall be established by the board of commissioners by January 1, 2025, and shall then apply to all newly appointed commissioners.

* * *

I.(1) The board shall hold at least ~~one meeting each month~~ ten meetings per year. The secretary of the board shall give written notice and agenda ~~to each member of the board at least five days prior to any meeting. The secretary shall be informed of any meeting so as to provide for his giving notice as above in~~ accordance with R.S. 42:19.

(2) In order to conduct any official meeting, a quorum is required. A quorum shall consist of sufficient members present to constitute two-thirds of the weighted vote, and at least one representative of a majority of the parishes comprising the authority. A majority of the quorum present at a meeting may exercise all the powers and perform all the duties of the board, except as otherwise

1 hereinafter provided or as limited by its bylaws. If there is only one parish
2 represented on the board of commissioners, a simple majority of the regular
3 membership is required to establish a quorum or to adopt a motion. Proxy voting
4 shall not be permitted under any circumstances.

5 * * *

6 §1656. General powers

7 The authority shall have all powers necessary or convenient to accomplish
8 the aforesaid purposes, including but not limited to the following:

9 * * *

10 ~~(23) The power to require quarterly reporting of the Regional Transit~~
11 ~~Authority funds and functioning.~~

12 ~~(24) The power to establish and address situations where the Regional~~
13 ~~Transit Authority violates state and city laws and establish penalties.~~

14 ~~(25) The power to establish an investigative committee for the following:~~
15 ~~probe waste, bid rigging, abuse of employees, and labor law violations.~~

16 ~~(26)~~ (23) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law to the contrary,
17 including the provisions of R.S. 45:161 et seq., the authority created herein and any
18 entity contracted to manage or operate the authority shall not be deemed a "person"
19 as defined in R.S. 45:162 or a "common carrier" as defined in R.S. 45:162, nor shall
20 the authority or any entity contracted to manage or operate the authority be construed
21 or interpreted to be such. Additionally, the authority and any entity contracted to
22 manage or operate the authority shall not be deemed to be a common carrier or
23 interpreted to be such by any court of this state in a suit for personal injury or
24 property damage.

25 §1656.1. Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board; creation; composition;
26 powers

27 * * *

28 B.

29 * * *

1 (3) The advisory board shall be required to meet at least quarterly, and
2 present findings, recommendations, and any other relevant information to ~~with the~~
3 board of commissioners at least once per year.

4 C. The advisory board shall be composed of twelve persons as follows:

5 * * *

6 (2) ~~A local member of the Amalgamated Transit Union who works for the~~
7 ~~Regional Transit Authority appointed by the president and business agent. A labor~~
8 ~~union representative from either the Amalgamated Transit Union, the International~~
9 ~~Brotherhood of Electric Workers, or the United Labor Union who works for the~~
10 ~~Regional Transit Authority. The nomination and selection shall be decided by the~~
11 ~~elected officers of all three unions.~~

12 * * *

13 (4) ~~The~~ A representative appointed by the president of each of the following
14 ~~universities~~ educational institutions: Loyola University, Tulane University, Xavier
15 University, Dillard University, Southern University at New Orleans, the University
16 of New Orleans, ~~and the University of Holy Cross, and Delgado Community~~
17 College.

18 (5) ~~Two members~~ One member appointed by the president of the Louisiana
19 American Federation of Labor and Congress of Louisiana Industrial Organizations.

20 D. All appointed members of the advisory board shall ~~receive~~ commit to
21 completing at least two hours of transit-specific training ~~in the duties,~~
22 ~~responsibilities, ethics, and substance of the positions held and two hours of training~~
23 ~~on labor and union relations best practices,~~ either before taking office or no later than
24 one year after the office is assumed. The minimum standards for transit-specific
25 training shall be established by the advisory board and shall apply to all newly
26 appointed members. ~~All training shall be formally approved by the board and~~
27 ~~ratified by each participating parish or city legislative body.~~

28 E. Any city or parish with appointments and representation on the Regional
29 Transit Authority board of commissioners shall have the authority to request an

1 internal audit of the Regional Transit Authority or, at its expense, hire a third party
2 to perform the audit. Any work hours by an employee of the authority that are
3 dedicated to support the third-party audit shall be reimbursed by the city or parish
4 requesting the third-party audit. All records and information requested in the audit
5 shall be provided in an expedited manner by the Regional Transit Authority. ~~A city~~
6 ~~or parish council may levy fines on the Regional Transit Authority.~~
7 Section 2. R.S. 48:1656(24) through (26) are hereby repealed in their entirety.

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 588 Original

2025 Regular Session

Mena

Abstract: Provides relative to the membership and certain powers of the Regional Transit Authority board of commissioners.

Present law requires the board of commissioners of the authority be composed of three members from each participating parish appointed by the chief executive officer of that parish, subject to the approval of its governing authority. Requires the chief executive officer of a parish to appoint a member in the event that the congressmen of a parish's legislative delegation fails to submit a list of names to the chief executive officer of that parish within 30 days of the date on which notice is sent to the congressmen of that parish's legislative delegation. Requires the chief executive officer of that parish to appoint a member. Additionally, requires the mayor or governing authority to appoint two new members if any participating parish opts out of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) after Aug. 1, 2024.

Proposed law modifies present law by transferring the authority to appoint two new members from the mayor to the chief executive officer of the parish.

Present law requires each member appointed by the chief executive officer of a parish to be domiciled within the parish. Specifies that members appointed to the authority by the parish legislator must possess transit expertise standards and required training and previous union experience. Further requires that the standards be established by the board by Jan. 1, 2025 and apply to all newly appointed commissioners.

Proposed law modifies present law by removing reference to the parish legislator and the requirement for union experience and specifying that the requirement be the completion of at least two hours of transit-specific training before the appointee takes office or no later than one year after office is assumed.

Present law requires the board hold at least one meeting each month. Requires the secretary of the board give written notice and agenda to each board member at least five days before and be informed of any meeting for notice purposes.

Proposed law modifies present law by changing the meeting frequency from at least one meeting per month to at least 10 meetings per year. Further removes the five-day notice requirement from the secretary.

Present law requires a quorum consisting of sufficient members present to constitute two-thirds of the weighted vote, and at least one representative of a majority of the parishes comprising the authority. Further authorizes the majority present at a meeting to exercise and perform all powers and duties of the board, except as otherwise provided by its bylaws. Additionally, prohibit proxy voting.

Proposed law retains present law and adds a requirement of a simple majority if there is only one parish represented on the board.

Present law provides for the following general powers of the board: to require quarterly reporting of the RTA funds and functioning; to establish and address situations where the RTA violates state and city laws and establish penalties; and to establish an investigative committee for probe waste, bid rigging, abuse of employees, and labor law violations.

Proposed law removes present law.

Present law requires the advisory board to meet quarterly with the board.

Proposed law modifies present law by requiring the meeting time for the advisory board to be at minimum, quarterly. Requires the advisory board to present findings, recommendations, and any other relevant information to the board at least once per year.

Present law requires a composition of the advisory board of at least 12 persons.

Present law requires the membership of the advisory board include a local member of the Amalgamated Transit Union who works for the RTA appointed by the president and business agent.

Proposed law modifies present law by requiring the membership include a labor union representative from either the Amalgamated Transit Union, the International Brotherhood of Electric Workers, or the United Labor Union who works for the RTA. Further requires the nomination and selection be decided by the elected officers of all three unions.

Present law requires the membership of the advisory board also include the presidents of certain La. universities.

Proposed law modifies present law by requiring that each president of the schools appoint a representative to the advisory board. Further adds Delgado Community College to the list of educational institutions.

Present law requires the membership of the advisory board include two members appointed by the president of the La. American Federation of Labor and Congress of La. Industrial Organizations.

Proposed law reduces this membership from two members to one member.

Present law requires appointed members of the advisory board receive at least two hours of transit-specific training and two hours of training on labor and union relations best practices, either before taking office or no later than one year after the office is assumed. Further requires all training be formally approved by the board and ratified by each participating parish or city legislative body.

Proposed law modifies present law by requiring a commitment to complete at least two hours of transit-specific training either before taking office or no later than one year after the office is assumed. Removes the requirement of training on labor and union relations best practices. Further requires the advisory board establish the transit-specific training minimum standards.

Present law authorizes any city or parish with appointments and representation on the board to audit the authority or hire a third party to perform the audit. Provides that all records and information requested in the audit be provided in an expedited manner by the authority and authorizes a city or parish council to levy fines on the authority.

Proposed law modifies present law by making it an expense of the city or parish when hiring a third party to perform the audit. Further requires that employees working hours dedicated to support the third-party audit be reimbursed to the authority.

(Amends R.S. 48:1655(A)(1)(c)(ii) and (2) and (I)(1) and (2), 1656(23), and 1656.1(B)(3), (C)(2) and (4) and (5), (D), and (E); Repeals R.S. 48:1656(24) - (26))