

Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans focused on the following legislative efforts during the 2012 Spring Regular Session of the Legislature, and the outcomes are as follows:

## **LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2012 - OVERVIEW**

### **LEVEES**

**HB 701**, by Raymond Garofalo of Chalmette, was strongly endorsed by the Southeast Flood Protection Authority —East and passed both Houses of the State Legislature, and signed into law by Governor Bobby Jindal.

*Position/Outcome:* Citizens for 1 strongly supported this bill because it creates the position of one police superintendent for all districts, resulting in an annual savings of approximately \$50,000 per district.

It also improves:

- Procedures by making the departments uniform, enhancing professionalism.
- Communication during emergencies and provides the ability to direct resources to the area most in need of assistance.

Levee districts are facing increased expenditures in operations and maintenance — about \$14 million for the three districts.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

In the area of Domestic Violence, Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans worked closely with Tulane Professor Tania Tetlow, Domestic Violence Clinic, Tulane University, to draft legislation.

**HB 441**, sponsored by Representative Neil Abramson, provides criminal court judges the ability to issue protective orders for victims of felony stalking and domestic violence for an **indefinite period of time**. A request to modify the length of the order may be heard by the court provided every effort is made to notify the victim/victim's representative prior to the hearing.

*Position/Outcome:* The bill passed both House and Senate. Governor Jindal signed the bill, effective August 1, 2012. As a result, it is recommended that the New Orleans Family Justice Center will train the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office regarding the necessary notifications.

**SB 611**, sponsored by Senator Karen Carter Petersen and assigned to Senate Education Committee, requiring BESE to transfer MFP funds to entities providing instruction to certain students preparing for GED test.

*Position/Outcome:* This bill was strongly supported by Citizens for 1, Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana, Youth Empowerment Project, and Partnership for Youth Development. This bill did not move out of Committee. Will work to move forward supporting this proposed direction in the future.

**SB 444**, sponsored by Senator Karen Carter Peterson, to address the Louisiana Children's Code to offer alternatives to detention for child status offenders. A transitional period would have been established.

*Position/Outcome:* Endorsed by LA Juvenile Detention Association and created from a report by the FINS Commission (Families in Need of Services). Supported in Committee Hearing by Citizens for 1. Did not move forward past Senate.

In addition, Citizens for 1 called on Senate Finance Committee to amend **HB1** and reinstate funding to OJJ (Office of Juvenile Justice) to continue contracts with established community partners that provide services to at-risk youth.

*Position/Outcome:* Funding was restored.

## ETHICS

**Act 838**, by Conrad Appel, provided the New Orleans Office of Inspector General with administrative subpoena authority and made its documents privileged under law, both of which will strengthen the OIG.

**HB 1**, amended in the House Appropriations committee by Rep. Joe Harrison of Gray, LA, was an attempt to remove the full funding for the state OIG from the appropriations bill. The amendment was adopted by the committee and was then approved by the full House of Representatives.

*Position/Outcome:* Citizens for 1 strongly opposed this amendment, as this is the only office in the state where citizens can make complaints about waste, fraud, and abuse.

- CF1 contacted members of the Senate Finance Committee personally, as well as, hundreds of emails sent from our web participants
- Attended and testified in the Senate Finance Committee
- Wrote a letter to the editors of the Times Picayune, the Advocate, and the Lafayette Gazette. [Click here to read letter.](#)

The amendment was defeated and the State OIG's funding was left intact. [Click to read letter](#) from New Orleans Inspector General Ed Quatrevaux thanking Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans for their leadership role in this effort,

## EDUCATION

The Education agenda for the 2012 legislative session was different from prior sessions. Recently re-elected Governor Bobby Jindal took education reform as the # 1 priority for his entire 2<sup>nd</sup> term. As such, his staff [wrote the major reform bills to be presented](#) rather than the usual process of having individual legislators write proposed legislation. Representative Steve Carter (R-Baton Rouge), Chair of the House Education Committee, and Senator Conrad Appel (R-Metairie), Chair of the Senate Education Committee sponsored most of this legislation.

The bills in the Governor's package included:

**HB 976 and SB 597**, mirror bills which expand school choice, including a voucher program called Scholarships for Excellence, pathways for charter schools, the providers who can offer courses to K-12 students, and a "parent trigger" for failing schools.

*Position/Outcome:*

**HB 976** became the bill that made its way through the legislature. The concept used in this legislation is called the "Dollar follows the Child," and it was a huge omnibus bill that included many aspects of education delivery. CF1 approved the bill and testified in support but sought [amendments to the voucher program](#). The bill passed out of committee but an amendment by Rep. Neil Abramson on the House floor required the Department of Education to establish criteria for the program and another amendment by Rep. Jim Fannin gave priority to students in D and F schools. These amendments addressed two of CF1's concerns. It was signed into law as Act 2.

**HB 974 and SB 603**, mirror bills which linked teacher tenure to performance, make effectiveness the primary criterion for personnel decisions, and grant authority for hiring and placement of personnel to school superintendents.

*Position/Outcome:*

**HB 974** became the bill that made its way through the legislature. CF1 testified in support of this bill. It passed the legislature and was signed into law as Act 1.

**HB 933 and SB 581**, mirror bills which outline a framework for a single coordinated early childhood education system with accountability for academic outcomes.

*Position/Outcome:*

**SB 581** became the bill that made its way through the legislature. CF1 supported the concept and testified in support of the bill; however, there were concerns with the reliability of testing at early ages. The bill was amended on the House floor by Walt Leger to allow the evaluation process established by the bill to be submitted to the legislature for final approval. This bill passed the legislature and was signed into law as Act 3.

**HB 969** by Rep. Kirk Talbot (R-River Ridge) would give a rebate for individuals and corporations who make donations to organizations that provides scholarships.

*Position/Outcome:* CF1 did not take a position on this bill. It passed the legislature and *became* Act 25.

**HB 716** by Rep. Cameron Henry (R-Metairie) which would repeal tenure for all new school bus drivers beginning in July 1, 2012, was subsumed by HB 293 by Rep. Joe Harrison (R-Gray).

*Position Outcome:* CF1 did not take a position on this bill. It passed and became Act 704.

**HB 292** by Rep. Stephen Pugh (R-Ponchatoula) would place school board term limits as an option for voters on local ballots across the state in the November 2012 elections.

*Position/Outcome:* CF1 did not take a position on this bill. Passed the Senate and became Act 386.