

# Louisiana Engineering Society

## Legislative Committee Report

May 18, 2022

By: Miles B. Williams

It was an active legislative session for LES and items regarding the regulation of the engineering profession.

### Re: Legislation that LES supported and promoted:

#### **HB305 by Rep. Foy Gadberry**

LES assisted Rep. Foy Gadberry and LAPELS in getting the definition of “Incidental Practice of Engineering by an Architect” established in law. HB305 has made it through both the House & the Senate and now awaits the Governor’s signature.

This legislation has been a long time coming with a lot of negotiation between LAPELS and the Architect’s Board. LAPELS identified this as an important law change and LES was happy to put our lobbying efforts behind it. Chris Richard along with Alan Krouse, Brenda Gajan and many others helped Rep. Gadberry to promote the legislation and minimize any opposition to it and the bill move through both Committees and both floor votes with almost no opposition. **This is a big win for the engineering profession and the protection of the health, and welfare of the public.**

### Re: Legislation that LES took a position on

**HB 555 by Rep. Chuck Owens** – This bill basically would have allowed for universal licensing/reciprocity. It was being backed by the Pelican Institute. LES opposed the legislation. Our push back along with other professional licensing organizations caused Rep. Owens to completely change the bill and by the time he brought it up in the House Commerce Committee he had amended it to just being a reporting requirement of all licensing boards relative to licensing data.

**HB 597 by Rep. Aimee Freeman** – This bill added burdensome legislative oversight to the rulemaking process. LES opposed this legislation in its original form and expressed our concerns to Rep. Freeman. We successfully got her to amend the items of concern and LES no longer opposes the bill with amendments adopted.

**HB 639 by Rep. Thomas Pressly** – This bill requires all licensing boards to inform a requesting individual with a criminal record if he is eligible for a license before he seeks education/testing in pursuit of the license. LES was opposed to the original bill on two technical matters. However, Rep. Pressley amended the bill to fix these two items. LES therefore was neutral on this legislation after amendments as it moved forward.

**SB 483 by Sen. Stewart Cathey** – This legislation was basically the companion bill to HB555. It would have allowed universal licensing for all occupational and professional certifications and licenses. This bill too was being pushed by the Pelican Institute. LES opposed SB 483 adamantly. We met with Sen. Cathey and the Pelican Institute Reps. At that meeting they agreed to exempt LAPELS from the bill. The Senator did this by amendment in the Senate Commerce Committee Meeting the next day and therefore LES will be neutral on the bill going forward.

This bill along with HB555 are part of the continuing attack by the Pelican Institute, the Goldwater Institute and other lobbying groups on diluting licensure across the United States in the name of “eliminating restrictions on trade and opening up markets as much as possible”. When it comes to Professional licensure of Engineers and Land Surveyors, this concept is misguided at best. We will continue to fight these types of bills every time they come up. Our opposition this session made an impression on the bill authors, and I think that they do not want to have this battle every year. However we must remain diligent as the national trend seems to be taking in other states.

**HB 162 by Rep. Freeman** – This bill added the ability of any interested party to challenge an occupational registration board’s rule relative to them being the “least restrictive regulation”. Though there are a couple of items in this bill that seem to be a little onerous, they do not seem to be a practical concern for LAPELS. These items will affect other occupational licensing boards much more and they need to lead the fight against it. Therefore, LES remains neutral on this bill not expend any “political” capital fighting it.

Finally, the Haynies performed very well on LES’s behalf once again this session and I would like to acknowledge their dedication and hard work in helping LES to defend and advance the Engineering profession.