

# Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission Report to the Governor 2012



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*The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission hereby submits to Governor Bobby Jindal for his consideration this detailed annual report for 2012, required by R.S. 2003 ACT No. 668, which addresses the issues set forth as the duties of this Commission:*

## **COMMISSION DUTIES**

- To monitor the status of Louisiana women for the purpose of evaluating their economic, educational, and health concerns, needs and/or hardships
- To identify and analyze trends that impact the health and prosperity of Louisiana women
- To advise the Governor on particular hardships, concerns, and needs that challenge Louisiana women and their possible solutions

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission is comprised of members appointed by the Governor to serve during the Governor's term of office. Members are selected from state agencies, the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus, and academic or professional areas including law, education, health, and social sciences to represent the racial, ethnic, regional, religious, socioeconomic, and political diversity of women in the state.

## **2012 COMMISSION MEMBERS**

- Laura Badeaux, Acting Chair, Louisiana Center for Women and Government, Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, LA
- Representative Regina Ashford Barrow, LA State House of Representatives, District 29, Member of the Legislative Women's Caucus
- Nancy Beben, Designee of the Department of Education, Baton Rouge, LA
- Tasha Bergeron, Department of Health and Hospitals, Baton Rouge, LA
- Senator Sharon Weston Broome, LA State Senate, District 15, Member of the Legislative Women's Caucus
- Anne Causey, appointed by the Governor, expertise in Economics, Leesville, LA
- Representative Simone B. Champagne, appointed by the Governor, expertise in Gender Studies, LA State House of Representatives, District 49
- Pamela Egan, appointed by the Governor, expertise in Public Health and Education, Covington, LA
- Cordelia Heaney, Executive Director of the Office on Women's Policy, Department of Children and Family Services, New Orleans, LA
- Melissa Horton, Designee of the Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, Baton Rouge, LA
- Conshonda Houston-Dotie, appointed by the Governor, expertise in Youth Organizations for Girls, Shreveport, LA
- Pam C. Jenkins, appointed by the Governor, expertise in Women's Organizations, Hammond, LA
- Stephanie LeGrange, Designee of the LA Department of Economic Development, Baton Rouge, LA
- Kim Dodd Manning, Designee of the Department of Administration, Baton Rouge, LA
- Michelle A. Massé, Designee of the Louisiana Board of Regents, Baton Rouge, LA
- Claudeidra Minor, Designee of the LA Workforce Commission, Baton Rouge, LA
- Judge Frances Pitman, appointed by the Governor, expertise in Law, Shreveport, LA
- Tiffany Simpson, Children's Cabinet, Baton Rouge, LA
- Representative Karen St. Germain, LA State House of Representatives, District 60, Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission Report to the Governor 2012

#### **I. Monitoring the Status of Louisiana Women**

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission's 2012 Report to the Governor strives to highlight the interconnectedness of women's economic, educational, and health concerns, and to show how changes in one policy area can have beneficial effects on other areas as well. Women make up 51% of the state's population, and policies intended to positively impact the quality of women's lives will improve the overall well-being of the state as a whole.

The commission constructed its recommendations with an emphasis on utilizing state-produced data wherever available, in order to provide recommendations that are more closely aligned with other state agencies' objectives, as well as to recognize the work state agencies perform that supports the success and well-being of Louisiana's women and girls. The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission's 2012 Report to the Governor aims to provide updated information on key issues highlighted in the previous year's report to the Governor, while also addressing a broader spectrum of women's issues, particularly in the areas of violence against women, chronic disease, and employment opportunities.

#### ***Women's Health: Risk Factors and Chronic Disease***

This year, the commission examined the issue of chronic disease and its effect on Louisiana women, specifically heart disease and obesity, which have elevated rates in Louisiana. Heart disease and obesity can contribute to many other long-term illnesses, and lead to costly medical expenses for the state. Heart disease is the nation's leading cause of death, and in Louisiana one in four deaths is caused by heart disease; 4.6% of all Louisiana women suffer from it. The adult obesity rate in Louisiana is 33.4%, putting us second highest in the nation in obesity rates. Among women, the rate rises to 33.8%. If the state were to reduce the average Body Mass Index by just 5%, we could see a potential health care cost savings of approximately \$9.84 million by 2030.

#### ***Women's Health: Reproductive Health***

*Teen pregnancy:* Louisiana's teen birth rate rose from ranking 13th highest among states in 2008 to 6th highest in 2010 and is higher than the national average.<sup>i</sup> Teen pregnancy is associated with adverse reproductive health outcomes including low-birth weight infants and pre-term birth. Teenage mothers are more likely to drop out of school, live in poverty, and to suffer from depression and other mental health disorders; the children of teenage mothers are more likely to have academic difficulties and behavioral problems later in life. All of these outcomes place a social and economic burden on families, communities, and the state; it is estimated that teen childbearing in Louisiana cost taxpayers at least \$169 million in 2008. For every \$1 spent on family planning services in Louisiana, an estimated \$12 is saved in costs associated with unintended pregnancy and an estimated \$4.40 is saved as a result of averting expenditures on medical services, welfare and nutritional services.<sup>ii</sup>

*Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS:* Louisiana ranks 3rd highest in Chlamydia case rates, 3rd for congenital Syphilis case rates, 1st in Gonorrhea case rates, and 1st in primary & secondary Syphilis case rates.<sup>iii</sup> The high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are of particular concern to the Commission since women suffer more frequent and more serious complications from STIs than men. Also, the transmission of STIs is a warning sign that those infected are not practicing safer sex and are at increased risk of becoming infected with other STIs or HIV, or may be at risk for an unintended pregnancy. Louisiana ranks



4th highest in national AIDS rates cases and Baton Rouge and New Orleans ranked 1st and 5th respectively among Metropolitan Statistical Areas.<sup>iv</sup> HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects African Americans and incidence is rising among youth (age 18-24).

### ***Violence against Women: Domestic Violence***

Louisiana ranks 4th in the nation for homicides of female victims murdered by males; of these victims, 97% knew their assailant, and 70% of those victims were the wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of their assailant. In Louisiana, female victims were murdered at a rate about 40% higher than the national average, but these statistics likely under-represent the true number of domestic-violence related fatalities in our state.

Violence against women is detrimental not only to the safety and psychological well-being of Louisiana's citizens, but is also of grave concern to our state's economic well-being. Domestic violence in our communities leads to lower workforce productivity and significantly higher state healthcare costs.

Louisiana has model legislation regarding protective orders and other protective strategies. Making more training available to law enforcement and the judiciary will ensure that legislation is implemented to maximize the legislation's effectiveness.

### ***Employment, Education and Job Training***

Research shows that there is a stark wage gap between men and women in our state. In Louisiana, women working full-time, year-round earned on average \$31,862 making Louisiana 43rd lowest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in rates of female earnings. In contrast, Louisiana men working full-time, year-round earned on average \$46,313, ranking Louisiana men 21st with average earnings greater than the earnings of men in 30 other states. Louisiana ranks second highest in the nation for women living in poverty (20.6% of Louisiana women), which is experienced predominantly by female-headed families (50.3%), Native American women (35%), and black women (32.5%) (See Appendix I, Louisiana Women Workers: 2011).

The Louisiana Workforce Commission's Louisiana Star Jobs site, a new web-based job search and career exploration online system, was launched in November 2012. The site rates the best occupations in Louisiana according to salary, the number of openings and the prospects for each career, with a score of five to one stars, five being the most desirable jobs. While no definitive data on the number of women in Louisiana currently working in those occupations is available, a study of the 273 four- and five-star occupations listed in the Louisiana Star Jobs system that matched the occupations to national American Community Survey data on women workers in Louisiana found that the job categories with the highest percentages of 4- and 5-star jobs (computer, engineering, and science occupations and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations) have very low numbers of women currently working in those fields, and women make up only 12.4% of the current production, transportation, and material moving occupations in Louisiana.<sup>v</sup> In order to position women for careers in the industries which are predicted to see the greatest amount of job growth in our state, additional efforts will need to be made.

The majority of occupational growth in Louisiana is predicted to be in careers that emphasize expertise in math and science. While women are graduating from college at a higher rate than men in Louisiana, more men than women are completing degrees in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math); 85.3% of engineering degrees, 77% of computer science degrees, and 82% of physics degrees were earned by men last year (See Appendix II: Quick Facts on Education in Louisiana).<sup>vi</sup>

### ***Representation of Women in Positions of Public Leadership***

Although women make up 51% of Louisiana's population, only 11% of the 2012-2016 Legislature is comprised of women, down from 16% in 2008-2012 (see Appendix III. Public Service and Louisiana Women). In 2012, Louisiana was ranked 49th for state legislatures for the proportion of women, and for 2013 the state has been ranked 50th.<sup>vii</sup> Currently, women make up 27% of public boards and commissions.

## **II. Trends that Impact Louisiana Women**

While Louisiana still faces significant obstacles around many issues that affect women, new laws and initiatives helped to make our state achieve notable strides in 2012, specifically in the areas of bullying, sex trafficking of minors, birth outcomes, and access to oral contraceptives.

### ***Bullying Effects on Louisiana Girls***

In the 2012 legislative session, a new anti-bullying act was passed by legislators. The "Tesa Middlebrook Anti-Bullying Act" (Act 861) requires that all school districts in the state adopt an official policy prohibiting bullying of students while on school property, at a school sponsored or school-related activity or event, on a school bus or van, at any designated school bus stop, and in any other school or private vehicle used to transport students to and from schools, or any school-sponsored activity or event. The Louisiana Department of Education developed a Bullying Prevention Toolkit of resources that is designed to assist school districts with their efforts to effectively address bullying in schools and to comply with all components of Act 861.

### ***Human Trafficking***

In 2011, the non-profit organization Shared Hope International gave Louisiana's laws regarding domestic sex trafficking of minors a report card grade of C (70/100). In 2012, due to the work of legislators, advocates, and state agencies and the work of the Human Trafficking of Minors Study Group, the Louisiana legislature passed Act 446. This act provides comprehensive upgrades to laws regarding human trafficking, specifically as they relate to the sex trafficking of minors. In 2012 Shared Hope International designated Louisiana the state with the highest report card grade, a grade of B (87/100).<sup>viii</sup>

### ***Women's Health: Birth Outcomes Initiative***

In August 2010, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) developed the Birth Outcomes Initiative as a way to engage the community and stakeholders as the department implemented strategies to improve birth outcomes for women and infants. Louisiana has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the United States, ranks 48th nationally in the rate of pre-term births and infant mortality, and 49th in percentage of low and very low birth weight babies. Through the Birth Outcomes Initiative, DHH has implemented public health programs to reduce the rate of Cesarean births, reduce smoking in pregnant women, and promote medical initiatives used to prevent repeat preterm births. The Commission supports the continuation of the Birth Outcomes Initiative as DHH continues to work towards improving Louisiana's birth outcomes.

### ***Women's Health: Oral Contraceptives***

In November 2012 the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommended that oral contraceptives be made available over the counter, citing cost, convenience, and improved access for women. The Commission supports these continued efforts.

### **III. Recommendations of the Commission**

In order to advise the Governor on particular hardships, concerns, and needs that challenge Louisiana women and their possible solutions, the Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission offers the following recommendations:

#### **A. Women's Health: Risk Factors and Chronic Disease**

*- The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends maintaining the sustainability of the Bayou Health, Managed-Care Medicaid Program, in order to provide comprehensive, patient-centered medical homes for low-income women.*

#### **B. Reproductive Health**

*- The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Education encourage school districts to explore public-private partnerships to establish or expand the number of school-based health centers in their districts, as resources are available.*

#### **C. Violence Against Women: Domestic Violence**

*- The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that members of the Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Justice Systems pursue Domestic Violence Training through their mandatory professional continuing education programs.*

*- The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Health and Hospitals, the Louisiana Medical Association, the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault, and the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence research the implementation of policies that would incorporate mandatory training on domestic violence into medical professionals' certification programs.*

#### **D. Employment, Education, and Job Training**

*- The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that state agencies that offer job training to citizens examine policy changes and marketing efforts that can be made by their agencies to encourage more women to complete job training programs that will prepare them for careers in the job categories of "computer, engineering, and science occupations," "natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations," and "production, transportation, and material moving occupations."*

*- The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Education and the Louisiana Board of Regents research the implementation of policies and programs that would help female students in elementary and high school achieve higher standardized test scores in math and science, and that would encourage young women to pursue advanced degrees in the STEM fields.*

#### **E. Representation of Women in Positions of Public Leadership**

*- The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission proposes that the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus and the Office on Women's Policy develop collaborative efforts to increase the number of women applying to serve on Louisiana's public boards and commissions, and to encourage more women to explore entering public service. The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission also requests that a section of the new Office on Women's Policy web site be used to assist in launching collaborative efforts to raise awareness and provide information regarding opportunities for women to apply to serve on Louisiana's public boards and commissions. Through the Office on Women's Policy web site and other collectively orchestrated initiatives to help encourage more women to consider entering public service and applying to serve on boards and commissions, we hope to improve the percentage of women participating in public service in Louisiana.*

## **IV. Activities Undertaken by the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission in 2012**

### **A. Additional 2012 Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission Activities**

To integrate action with the findings of research on the needs of women in respect to economic enhancement, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission partnered with the Louisiana Center for Women and Government to host the Louisiana Women Leaders Conference on Small Business Entrepreneurship May 3 - 4, 2012 in Baton Rouge. Additional partners included U. S. Chamber of Commerce Center for Women and Business, AT&T Louisiana, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana, Capital One Bank, Lafourche Parish Commission on Women, Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus, Louisiana Lottery, and the Demo Diva Demolition Company.

### **B. Office on Women's Policy**

The new Executive Director the Office on Women's Policy, Cordelia Heaney, began her position in September. For the upcoming year, the goals for the Office on Women's Policy include strengthening the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission by assisting with the recruitment of additional members and helping to build connections between regional women's commissions and the state-wide commission; increasing the Office on Women's Policy's visibility through outreach and establishing standing projects including a web site, grant writing collaborations, and a project to encourage more women to apply to serve on state boards and commissions; and building the Office on Women's Policy's partnership projects, like offering an internship and working with the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus on compiling updated lists of proposed bills that effect women.



**LOUISIANA WOMEN'S POLICY AND RESEARCH COMMISSION  
REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR 2012**

**I. Monitoring the status of Louisiana women for the purpose of evaluating their economic, educational, and health concerns, needs and/or hardships.**

“Women’s issues” are everyone’s issues. Gender-based violence, poverty, health disparities, and lack of educational opportunities lead to harmful outcomes not just for the 51% of Louisianans that are women, but for our families and for our communities. Conversely, women’s ability to access quality health care, education, job training, and employment opportunities improves the health outcomes and economic prosperity of Louisiana’s citizens as a whole.

Although the issues discussed in this report are assigned to the categories of either economic, educational, or health concerns of women, it is nonetheless important to highlight the interrelated nature of these topics. Access to education can enable women to achieve greater economic success, which in turn can enable women to have improved health outcomes; likewise, the improved long-term health rates of women will result in fiscal savings for the state, healthier families, and enhanced workforce output. Therefore, successful policy changes around any single women’s issue will impact our state’s ability to succeed in other categories as well. With this interconnectedness in mind, the Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission engages with women’s policy collaboratively by working with non-profit organizations, state agencies, universities, and concerned citizens to assess economic, educational, and health concerns of women, and proposes practical policy recommendations that strive to address the interconnectedness of women’s concerns.

The Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission’s 2012 Report to the Governor aims to provide updated information on key issues highlighted in the previous year’s report to the Governor, while also addressing a broader spectrum of women’s issues, particularly in the areas of violence against women, chronic disease, and employment opportunities. The Commission constructed its recommendations with an emphasis on utilizing state-produced data whenever possible, in order to provide recommendations that are more closely aligned with other state agencies’ objectives, as well as to offer recognition for the work state agencies conduct that supports the continued success and well-being of Louisiana’s women and girls.

**A. Women’s Health: Risk Factors and Chronic Disease**

*Measures: Heart Disease and Obesity*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, and in 1999 Louisiana began receiving funds from the CDC to support a state heart disease and stroke prevention program. In Louisiana, 1 in 4 deaths result from heart disease. According to the 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey results, 4.6% of women in the state suffer from heart disease. Among women, the rates are highest for White women at 4.9%, followed by African American women at 4.0%.<sup>ix</sup> Louisiana’s mortality rate of 22 deaths per 10,000 is higher than the national average of 18 per 10,000. Louisiana women overall have a mortality rate of 18 per 10,000; the rates are highest for African American women at 21 per 10,000 followed by White women at 17 per 10,000. The mortality rates from heart disease are highest in Madison Parish, followed by Franklin, Richland, Catahoula, West Carroll, Caldwell, Calcasieu, Tensas, Jefferson Davis, La Salle, Cameron, and Beauregard.<sup>x</sup> Although the rate of women with heart disease is smaller than the rate of men with heart disease, this issue is of special concern to the Commission. The rise of chronic disease is steadily increasing and measures need to be taken to change this dangerous trajectory.

The adult obesity rate in Louisiana is 33.4%, putting us 2nd, following Mississippi, among all 50 states. Among Louisiana women, the rate increases to 33.8%<sup>xi</sup> with women in St. John the Baptist and Bienville Parishes having the highest obesity rate at 39.1%.<sup>xii</sup> According to recently released data from the CDC, if obesity rates continue to rise on their current projection, by 2030 Louisiana's obesity rate would be at 62.1% and related health care costs could climb by as much as 12.8%. Based on this potential rise in obesity, the number of new cases of chronic heart disease will likely rise as well if the trajectory we are on is not corrected. If the state were to reduce the average Body Mass Index (BMI) by 5%, we could see a potential health care cost savings of around \$9.84 million dollars by 2030. The health of Louisiana's women is important, and we need to act decisively to prevent our state from continuing in the dangerous direction our obesity rates are headed.

## **B. Women's Health: Reproductive Health**

*Measures: Teen pregnancy, rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)*

The state of reproductive and sexual health of women and girls in Louisiana is of critical concern. Louisiana has among the highest rates of teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV in the nation. The prevalence of teen pregnancy and STIs (including HIV) has a large impact on the state economically and hinders the social progress of many communities and cities in Louisiana. Investments in comprehensive evidence-based prevention programming to reduce such rates will not only benefit the women and children of Louisiana, but will economically benefit and alleviate the cost burden of treatment and care management on the state as well.

Louisiana's teen birth rate (per 1000 girls aged 15-19) rose from ranking 13th highest (54) among states in 2008 to 6th highest in 2010 (47.7) and is higher than the national average (34.3).<sup>xiii</sup> While there has been an overall negative percent change in teenage birth from 2009-2010, the change is occurring at a slower rate in Louisiana than in other states as well as the national average. Births among teens aged 15-19 accounted for 12% of all births in 2010, as compared to the national percentage of 9%. The most recently released Louisiana birth record data from 2009 showed that among girls aged 15-19 who gave birth, 44.3% were Caucasian and 53.6% were African American. However, the proportion of 15-19 year-olds who gave birth within each race is very different. While 15-19 year old girls accounted for nearly 18% of all births among African-American women, they accounted for 10% of all births among Caucasian women.<sup>xiv</sup> In 2008, the rate of births to teens was greatest in East Baton Rouge, followed by Caddo, Orleans, Jefferson, Ouachita, Calcasieu, Rapides and Lafayette.<sup>xv</sup>

Teen pregnancy is associated with adverse reproductive health outcomes including low-birth weight (LBW) infants and pre-term birth (PTB). Teenage mothers are more likely to drop out of school, remain unmarried, live in poverty, and to suffer from depression and other mental health disorders. The children of teenage mothers are more likely to have academic difficulties and behavior problems later in life. All of these outcomes place a social and economic burden on families, communities, and the state. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy estimates that teen childbearing in Louisiana costs taxpayers at least \$169 million in 2008. Taxpayer costs associated with children born to teen mothers in Louisiana included: \$43 million for public health care (Medicaid and LACHIP); \$24 million for child welfare; and for children who have reached adolescence or adulthood, \$28 million for increased rates of incarceration and \$54 million in lost tax revenue due to decreased earnings and spending. Conversely, due to the 29% decline in the teen birth rate in Louisiana between 1991 and 2008, taxpayers saved an estimated \$129 million in 2008.<sup>xvi</sup> Additionally, for every \$1 spent on family planning services in Louisiana, an estimated \$12 is saved in costs associated with unintended pregnancy and an estimated \$4.40 is saved as a result of averting expenditures on medical services, welfare and nutritional services.<sup>xvii</sup>

Sexually Transmitted Infection rates including HIV in Louisiana are among the highest in the nation. Louisiana ranks 3rd highest in Chlamydia, 3rd for congenital Syphilis case rates, 1st in Gonorrhea case rates, and 1st in primary & secondary Syphilis case rates.<sup>xviii</sup> The high rates of STIs are of particular concern for several reasons. First, women suffer more frequent and more serious complications from STIs than men. If left untreated, STIs can cause serious health problems including cervical cancer, liver disease, pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and pregnancy complications. Second, the transmission of STIs is a warning sign that those infected are at increased risk of becoming infected with other STIs or HIV or may be at risk for unintended pregnancies. Primary prevention of STIs begins with education and changing the sexual behavior that place persons at risk for infection. The link between STI infection and HIV transmission is well established and has prompted the Centers for Disease Control to recommend STI prevention as a way of reducing the further spread of HIV and AIDS.

In 2010 Louisiana ranked 4th highest in national AIDS rates cases and Baton Rouge and New Orleans ranked 1st and 5th respectively among Metropolitan Statistical Areas.<sup>xix</sup> HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects African Americans and the incidence of HIV is rising among youth (age 18-24). While African Americans make up 32% of the population in Louisiana, they are:

- 74% of newly diagnosed HIV cases
- 78% of newly diagnosed AIDS cases
- 86% of 13-24 year olds living with HIV/AIDS
- Overall 29% of all new HIV infections occur in women, and of those cases 86% are African American women<sup>xx</sup>

In Louisiana in 2009, 172 infants were born to HIV-infected mothers and 85% were African American. Additionally, three of those infants were perinatally infected with HIV, all of whom were African American.<sup>xxi</sup>

The high rates of STIs/HIV and congenital transmission of STIs/HIV, as well as the racial disparities in transmission rates, points to a lack of access to care particularly for women and girls of color. The Louisiana Family Planning Program served 53,800 clients in 2010, and 90% of those clients were below 100% of poverty.<sup>xxii</sup> The Take Charge program, with 66,085 enrollees, offers Medicaid coverage for women who are 200% below the poverty line and do not have health insurance. Title X-supported Family Planning clinics in Louisiana help women prevent 17,700 unintended pregnancies each year.<sup>xxiii</sup> Continuation of these services is critical to prevention of the adverse reproductive health outcomes mentioned above.

The reproductive health of women and girls needs to be understood not only in the context of the direct effects on the individual, but also on the family unit and the community. There are numerous contextual factors such as poor mental health, unemployment, poverty, history of abuse, lack of education, unstable housing and limited access to healthcare which are strongly associated with teen pregnancy and STI/HIV transmission. Each exacerbates the other, leading to a perpetual cycle of illness and poverty. Improving the reproductive health of women and girls starts with comprehensive sexual health education, but also includes acknowledging the role that other contextual factors play in contributing to these outcomes and supporting policies which improve the all-around well-being of women, their families and their communities.

### **C. Violence against Women: Domestic Violence**

*Measures: Homicides of women killed by men, economic effects of domestic violence*

Louisiana ranks 4th in the nation for the rate of homicides of female victims murdered by males as of 2010, the most recent year that statistics are available. Of these victims, 97% knew their assailant, and 70% of those victims were the wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of their assailant. In Louisiana, female victims were murdered at a rate of 1.86 per 100,000, about 40% higher than the national average of 1.22 per 100,000 for that year.<sup>xxiv</sup> However, these statistics likely under-represent the true number of domestic-violence related fatalities in our state, as they only include single-victim/single-offender cases, excluding multiple-homicide cases where children, friends and family members of victims were also killed. These statistics also do not count same-sex intimate partner homicides, and exclude the deaths of perpetrators in cases of domestic violence murder-suicides.

Violence against women is detrimental not only to the safety and psychological well-being of Louisiana's citizens, but is also of concern to our state's economic well-being. Nationally, women experiencing physical domestic violence reported 7.2 days average of lost work-related productivity and 33.9 days in productivity losses associated with other activities,<sup>xxv</sup> decreasing our citizens' ability to succeed in the workplace. Domestic violence prevention can also play a significant role when looking for ways to reduce Louisiana's rising health care costs. Nationally the "costs of intimate partner violence exceed \$5.8 billion each year, \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health care services."<sup>xxvi</sup> One 1994 study found that \$1,775 more was spent on average on women suffering from domestic violence who utilized hospital services than on a random sample of general admitted persons.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Louisiana does not have a formal centralized database by a government agency tracking domestic violence-related fatalities. Louisiana was able to pilot a Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project in limited parishes from 2005 to 2010. This project compiled data from three sources to estimate the fatality rate: advocate reports; FBI Supplemental Homicide Data (however only 125 of 320 Louisiana LE offices report); and media accounts. The Louisiana Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project, which was funded federally by the Office on Violence Against Women and the Department of Justice, supplied vital information on domestic violence fatality incidents on a parish-by-parish level, empowering both researchers and law enforcement/service providers through making available critical information on domestic violence-related homicides in our state, but was unable to continue because there were no additional funds available for the project.

Louisiana has model legislation regarding protective orders and other protective strategies to assist women. Although physical violence is considered the most common form of domestic violence against women, multiple forms of abuse, including not only physical, but also emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse, are frequently part of the violence experienced by victims. To mitigate domestic violence, it is imperative that our state's legislation is being properly implemented, and providing training on the many dimensions of domestic violence to law enforcement and the judiciary would help to achieve that goal.

### **D. Employment, Education and Job Training**

*Measure: Median annual earnings; the Louisiana Workforce Commission Star Jobs System and the American Community Survey*

In Louisiana, women working full-time, year-round in 2011 earned on average \$31,862, making Louisiana 43rd lowest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in rates of women's earnings. Nationally, working women's median annual earnings were \$37,133; the highest paid women workers were in the District of Columbia (\$60,332), while the lowest paid were in Mississippi (\$29,548). In contrast,

Louisiana men working year-round, full-time earned on average \$46,313, ranking Louisiana men 21st with average earnings greater than the earnings of men in 30 other states. Nationally, the median annual earnings for men in 2011 were \$46,993. Louisiana ranks second highest in the nation for women living in poverty at 20.6%, which is experienced predominantly by female-headed families (50.3%), Native American women (35%), and black women (32.5%) (See Appendix I, Louisiana Women Workers: 2011).

In November 2012 the Louisiana Workforce Commission unveiled Louisiana Star Jobs, a new web-based job search and career exploration tool that makes it easy for anyone to find and apply for the best jobs in Louisiana. The online system rates the best occupations in Louisiana according to salary, the number of openings and the prospects for each career, with a score of five to one stars, five being the most desirable jobs. It provides links to current job postings, occupation descriptions, and job training and education opportunities. While no definitive data on the number of women in Louisiana currently working in those occupations is available, a study of the 273 four- and five-star occupations listed in the Louisiana Star Jobs system that matched the listed occupations to federal American Community Survey data on women workers in Louisiana found the following:

<b>Job Category*</b>	<b>Number of 5-Star Jobs</b>	<b>Number of 4-Star Jobs</b>	<b>Number of 4 &amp; 5-Star Jobs</b>	<b>% of all 4 &amp; 5 star jobs</b>	<b>% of these positions occupied by LA Women*</b>
<b>Management, business, science, and arts occupations</b>	20	18	38	13.919%	54.0%
<b>Computer, engineering, and science occupations</b>	16	31	47	17.216%	19.9%
<b>Education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations</b>	3	36	39	14.286%	67.3%
<b>Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations</b>	13	21	34	12.454%	75.1%
<b>Service occupations</b>	1	17	18	6.593%	54.9%
<b>Sales and office occupations</b>	4	16	20	7.326%	64.6%
<b>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</b>	10	42	52	19.048%	3.3%
<b>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</b>	8	16	24	8.791%	12.4%

\* From the 2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census <sup>xxviii</sup>

The job categories with the highest percentages of 4- and 5-star jobs (computer, engineering, and science occupations and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations) have very low numbers of women currently working in those fields, and women make up only 12.4% of the current production, transportation, and material moving occupations in Louisiana.<sup>xxxix</sup> The largest wage gap was also found to be between women and men employed in the production, transportation, and material moving occupations category, with women earning just 51.7 cents for every dollar earned by men in those occupations.<sup>xxx</sup> In order to position women for careers in the industries which are predicted to see the greatest amount of job growth in our state, we will need to make additional efforts.

It is important to note that the American Community Survey job categories are broadly defined, and that while women may occupy the majority of a job category field, when examining the subfields of those categories listed in the American Community Survey, Louisiana women tend to be overrepresented in the less lucrative occupations within the job category. For example, in the job category “healthcare practitioners and technical occupations” only 34.6% of the subfield of family and general practitioners are women in Louisiana, whereas 79.1% of the subfield of medical and clinical laboratory technicians are women; in the subfields of the “education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations” category, 31.7% of lawyers and judicial law clerks in Louisiana are women, whereas 77.7% of the subfield of counselors, social workers, and other community and social service specialists are women.

Unfortunately, while the majority of occupational growth in Louisiana will be in careers that emphasize math and science acumen, Louisiana men are currently out-performing women academically in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields (See Appendix II, Quick Facts on Education in Louisiana). For example, in 4th grade 64% of boys received a score of basic, mastery or advanced on state LEAP tests in science, compared to 62% of girls. In 8th grade the gap begins to widen, with 61% of boys and 55% of girls achieving a score of basic, mastery or advanced, and by high school the divide is marked: 70% of boys versus 58% of girls received a score of basic, mastery or advanced on the state GEE test in science.<sup>xxxix</sup> Unfortunately, increasing the numbers of women completing a post-secondary degree alone is not the answer; while women are graduating from college at a higher rate than men in Louisiana, more men than women are completing degrees in the STEM fields.<sup>xxxii</sup>

## **E. Representation of Women in Positions of Public Leadership**

Although women make up 51% of Louisiana’s population, only 11% of the 2012-2016 Louisiana Legislature is comprised of women, down from 16% in 2008-2012 (see Appendix III, Public Service and Louisiana Women). In 2012, Louisiana was ranked 49th for state legislatures for the proportion of women, and for 2013 the state has been ranked 50th.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Currently, women make up only 27% of public boards and commissions (823 out of 3096) in the state. Little is known about the gender make-up of private boards, since they are currently only required to file annual reports, and are not required to provide the sex of board members.



## **II. Trends that Impact Louisiana Women**

While Louisiana still faces significant obstacles around many issues that affect women, new laws and initiatives helped our state make notable strides in 2012, specifically in the areas of bullying, sex trafficking of minors, and birth outcomes. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' show of support for making oral contraceptives available over the counter was also a notable positive trend in an area of concern to Louisiana women in 2012.

### **A. Bullying Effects on Louisiana Girls**

It is easy to find stories of bullying all over the country with just a quick internet search. There have been three high-profile cases in Louisiana over the past year involving girls who committed suicide as a result of bullying (Danielle Cox of Bossier City, Hannah Pauley of Calcasieu, and Tesa Middlebrook of Pointe Coupee Parish). All across the nation, bullying and its harmful effects can be seen in the countless number of cases that make the news. What is disheartening is the silent voices we never hear from.

In the 2012 legislative session, a new anti-bullying act was passed by legislators. Senator Rick Ward authored the "Tesa Middlebrook Anti-Bullying Act" (Act 861). He says it was named for his former constituent because the story of bullying that led to her suicide disturbed him so greatly. Act 861 requires that all school districts in the state adopt an official policy prohibiting bullying of students while on school property, at school sponsored or school-related activities or events, on a school buses or vans, at designated school bus stops, and in any other school or private vehicles used to transport students to and from schools, or to and from any school-sponsored activities or events. The Act defines bullying as any pattern of obscene gestures; written electronic or verbal communications that threaten harm; taunting; malicious teasing; physical acts, not limited to hitting, kicking, pushing, or damaging personal property; and repeatedly shunning or excluding students from activities.

School employees are required to undergo at least four hours of training on how to detect and curb bullying. In addition, the law requires teachers and other school staff to utilize a variety of prevention and intervention tools to create environments of safety, respect, and expectations of appropriate behavior.

The Louisiana Department of Education developed a Bullying Prevention Toolkit of resources that are designed to assist school districts with their efforts to effectively address bullying in schools and all components of Act 861.

### **B. Human Trafficking**

In 2011, non-profit organization Shared Hope International gave Louisiana's domestic minor sex trafficking laws a report card grade of C (70/100). The grades given each state were assigned as part of a comprehensive study on existing state laws that looked at 41 key legislative components they determined must be addressed in states' laws in order to effectively respond to the crime of domestic minor sex trafficking. In 2012, due to the work of legislators, advocates, and state agencies and the work of the Human Trafficking of Minors Study Group, the Louisiana legislature passed Act 446. This act provides comprehensive upgrades to our laws regarding human trafficking, specifically as they relate to the sex trafficking of minors. In 2012 Shared Hope International designated Louisiana the state with the highest report card grade, with a grade of B (87/100).<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Nationally, it is difficult to obtain accurate statistical information on the rates of human trafficking or the number of human trafficking victims, and Louisiana is no exception. Thus far, Louisiana has had only one state prosecution of a human trafficking victim and there has been only one prosecution of an individual for human trafficking in the federal system to date; both cases involved domestic minor victims

of sex trafficking. These improvements in statute do not take into account adult victims of sex trafficking or victims of forced labor human trafficking. The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission supports the passage of Act 446 and the state's continued work on human trafficking issues, and hopes to see the state continue to make progress on this issue.

### **C. Women's Health: Birth Outcomes Initiative**

In August 2010, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) developed the Birth Outcomes Initiative to engage the community and stakeholders as the department implemented strategies to improve birth outcomes for women and infants. In spite of the availability of first-rate obstetric and neonatal technology and expertise, Louisiana ranks poorly on many national indicators produced by organizations such as the United Health Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the March of Dimes. Louisiana has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the United States, ranks 48th nationally in the rate of pre-term births and infant mortality, and 49th in percentage of low (less than 5.5 pounds) and very low (less than 3.4 pounds) birth weight babies. Through the Birth Outcomes Initiative, DHH has implemented public health programs to reduce the rate of Cesarean births, reduce smoking in pregnant women, and promote medical initiatives used to prevent repeat preterm births.

***Thirty-Nine Week Initiative:*** According to DHH, Louisiana ranks fourth in the nation in cesarean sections per live births, with C-sections steadily rising, accounting for 36% of births as of 2007. Many of these are elective, or associated with early induction. According to DHH, elective early inductions and C-sections lead to increases in low birth weight and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) admissions. One way to address the issue is through reform of the pay structure of Medicaid, which pays for the majority of Louisiana births. Increasing the compensation rate for non-induced vaginal birth deliveries has been identified as a way to incentivize providers and in turn lower the rate of elective early births, the number of unnecessary C-sections, and the rate of premature birth.

The 39 Week Initiative, a voluntary program in which hospitals agree to establish policies to end the practice of elective, non-medically indicated deliveries prior to 39 weeks gestation, has shown potential for success. Hospitals have reported dramatic decreases in the occurrence of elective early births, without new investments. Currently, all 58 birthing hospitals in the state have agreed to participate in the 39 Week Initiative.

In April 2012, DHH began monitoring and validating 39-week data in the electronic birth certificate system through the Louisiana Electronic Event Registration System (LEERS). LEERS has been enhanced to include data on births that occur before the 39th week of pregnancy. This information will provide valuable data that will help the state to improve birth outcomes by facilitating the development of evidenced based policies. According to Dr. Rebekah Gee, who directs the Birth Outcomes Initiative, the data necessary to understand why Louisiana ranks 48th nationally in infant mortality and preterm birth and 49th in the percentage of low birth weight and very low birth weight babies has previously not been available. This change will move the state's vital records system from measurement to action, empowering the Department to create meaningful policies. Such data will also aid in the development of two other goals of the Birth Outcomes Initiative: the creation of a Louisiana "Report Card for Maternity and NICU Care," and the creation of "Centers of Birthing Excellence" based on a five star program, to be determined in partnership between DHH and Louisiana's birthing hospitals.

***Perinatal Quality Improvement:*** The Birth Outcomes Initiative has created a perinatal quality collaborative throughout the state's leading maternity care hospitals that will focus on labor and delivery and NICU quality improvement. This year-long project began in July 2011 with 15 major maternity hospitals and is led by DHH and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. The Birth Outcomes Initiative partnered with the Louisiana Healthcare Association (LHA) to sponsor Phase II of the collaborative. Twenty-

seven hospitals will be participating in the second year of the collaborative.

**Birth Score Cards:** Performance measurement systems are being developed to determine whether interventions are successful and to ensure transparency in practice. A perinatal data and measurement portal is being created to allow reporting beyond birth outcomes and to include other metrics. Data will be shared with appropriate entities tasked with generating the statewide annual perinatal report card. DHH is currently piloting the birth score card portal and will add additional measures before making the portal available to all hospitals and physicians in calendar year 2013.

**Behavioral Health Screening:** To achieve measurable behavioral health impacts for Louisiana's Medicaid-eligible women, a statewide system of screenings, referrals and treatments for pregnant women at highest risk, called the Louisiana Health Assessment and Referral Tool (LaHART), is being implemented. DHH is working with approximately 30 pilot providers who will have access to LaHART, an innovative web-based tool to screen women for tobacco, drug or alcohol use; signs of domestic violence; and depression. Providers will then be able to conduct brief interventions and refer them to the appropriate services.<sup>xxxv</sup> This pilot is being conducted in close coordination with DHH's Bayou Health plans and Magellan, the statewide managing organization for behavioral health services. Private providers will be reimbursed for performing a behavioral health screen and a brief intervention for each pregnant woman receiving Medicaid. DHH will work over the next year to increase the number of obstetricians conducting screenings and brief interventions.

Quitting smoking can reduce a woman's risk of preterm birth; however, many women are unaware of the smoking cessation services available to Medicaid eligible pregnant women. Currently, DHH is finalizing the screening tool automated referral to the tobacco quit telephone line. DHH will work with Bayou Health to implement the Louisiana Health Assessment and Referral Tool.

**Interconception Care:** Finally, the Birth Outcomes Initiative will seek to improve preconception and interconception health for women at high risk of poor birth outcomes in Louisiana. Experts have identified evidence-based interventions such as assistance by a care coordinator and home visitation that can be delivered to women at high risk to reduce the chances of an adverse outcome for mother and baby. The purpose is to provide care coordination, health promotion, screening and interventions for women of childbearing age to reduce risk factors that might affect future pregnancies. DHH is currently finalizing tools for pregnancy risk assessment, reproductive health plan, and post-partum assessment and incorporating these into the Bayou Health plan flow. Currently, the Birth Outcomes Initiative is implementing an interconception care program in the Greater New Orleans Community Health Connection (GNOCHC) program. Approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in June 2012, the program will utilize Healthy Start case managers to provide access to interpregnancy primary care health services for eligible women who have previously delivered a premature, stillbirth, low or very low birth weight infant.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission supports the efforts of the Department of Health and Hospitals to improve Louisiana's birth outcomes. While progress has been made, national associations such as the March of Dimes and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials have adopted an interim goal of an 8% reduction in the preterm birth rate by 2014 and have asked state and territorial health departments to adopt this goal as well.

## **D. Women’s Health: Oral Contraceptives**

There are currently no over the counter oral contraceptives available in the United States, but in November 2012 the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommended that oral contraceptives be made available over the counter. They concluded that cost, convenience and lack of access are reasons women frequently cite for not consistently using their birth control prescriptions; that the medications are safe to sell over the counter; and that the savings to our health care system outweigh any risks. Furthermore, studies found that women would still continue seeing a physician for preventative health screenings even if they no longer needed a prescription to attain oral contraceptives.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Offering oral contraceptives over the counter would encourage drug companies to offer more affordable pricing for birth control, and would eliminate the necessity for the federal government to require faith-based employers to pay for oral contraceptives as part of their employee health insurance plans.

The Commission applauds efforts to raise support for making oral contraception available to adults over the counter. Eliminating the necessity for women to see a physician to receive a prescription for oral contraceptives will make family planning easier and more affordable for women.

## **III. Recommendations of the Commission**

As part of its charge to advise the Governor on the particular hardships, concerns, and needs that challenge Louisiana women and their possible solutions, the Louisiana Women’s Policy & Research Commission offers the following recommendations:

### **A. Women’s Health: Risk Factors and Chronic Disease**

Chronic diseases and associated risk factors have impacted the health of Louisiana’s women. Despite the best efforts of many dedicated health care professionals across Louisiana, the state continually places in the bottom tier of national health rankings. The rankings are particularly stark in the areas of primary and preventive care. One significant method to combat this issue is through consistent, high-quality health care. Consistent, high-quality health care can be achieved by implementing a managed-care infrastructure that strives for an evidence-based, quality-driven system that incorporates the use of patient-centered medical home models and health information technology. The managed-care infrastructure has an increased focus on coordination of care—particularly in primary, specialty and preventive care—which is a necessary component for improving overall health outcomes for women.

***The Louisiana Women’s Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends maintaining the sustainability of the Bayou Health, Managed-Care Medicaid Program, in order to provide comprehensive, patient-centered medical homes for low-income women.***

### **B. Reproductive Health**

Louisiana is currently home to only 57 full-time school-based health centers.<sup>xxxvii</sup> These school-based centers provide essential access to preventative and mental health care to underserved and uninsured children and their communities, as well as peer-health advocate programs and education. Supplying on-site health care services to students enhances their ability to succeed academically. These centers provide vital resources in the fight against chronic disease in our state, and can also help provide opportunities for prevention education and early detection of STIs, which can help halt further cases as well as related health issues.

***The Louisiana Women’s Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Education encourage school districts to explore public-private partnerships to establish or expand***

*the number of school-based health centers in their districts, as resources are available.*

### **C. Violence against Women: Domestic Violence**

Before it concluded in 2010, the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project released recommendations for statewide systems changes to achieve the ultimate goal of reducing the incidence of domestic violence and domestic violence fatalities throughout Louisiana. In the project's report "The Killing Must Stop: Death at the Hands of the Person You Love," one of their recommendations was that organizations and agencies that service domestic violence survivors receive continued domestic violence training.

Domestic violence victims and perpetrators are those most likely to interact with law enforcement agencies and the court system. Standardized, mandated domestic violence training for members of the civil, criminal, and juvenile justice systems—especially judges and law enforcement officers—would ensure quality controls on domestic violence education throughout the state.

***The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that members of the Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Justice Systems pursue Domestic Violence Training through their mandatory professional continuing education programs.***

Many victims of domestic violence's first point of contact with assistance is with a medical professional. Victims' early identification and treatment ensures that they receive appropriate care, and can mean long term reductions in health care costs as well. Fifteen states have statutes requiring medical professionals to participate in trainings on domestic violence,<sup>xxxviii</sup> but Louisiana does not currently require that medical professionals receive domestic violence training in order to maintain their medical license.

***The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Health and Hospitals, the Louisiana Medical Association, the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault, and the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence research the implementation of policies that would incorporate mandatory training on domestic violence into medical professionals' certification programs.***

### **D. Employment, Education and Job Training**

After a review of the distribution of four- and five star jobs in Louisiana from the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Star Jobs System, it is clear that there is a gap in employment of women in the growing fields of "computer, engineering, and science occupations," "natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations," and "production, transportation, and material moving occupations." To attain jobs that are four- and five-star jobs in Louisiana, generally either vocational training or post-secondary degrees are necessary.

***The Louisiana Women's Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that state agencies that offer job training to citizens examine policy changes and marketing efforts that can be made by their agencies to encourage more women to complete job training programs that will prepare them for careers in the job categories of "computer, engineering, and science occupations," "natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations," and "production, transportation, and material moving occupations."***

The fields of natural resource management, technology, and engineering are key growth fields in Louisiana, and to succeed in those industries women need to achieve higher scores in the math and science disciplines in elementary and high school standardized tests, as well as being encouraged and supported in pursuing degrees in these more lucrative science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines.

***The Louisiana Women’s Policy & Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Education and the Louisiana Board of Regents research the implementation of policies and programs that would help female students in elementary and high school achieve higher standardized test scores in math and science, and that would encourage young women to pursue advanced degrees in the STEM fields.***

#### **E. Representation of Women in Positions of Public Leadership**

Increasing women’s representation in positions of public leadership is an important step towards achieving better outcomes for women in the areas of employment, education, and health. Louisiana being ranked as the state with the lowest percentage of female representation in its legislature means that ideally extra efforts should be made to encourage women’s participation in public service.

***The Louisiana Women’s Policy & Research Commission proposes that the Louisiana Legislative Women’s Caucus and the Office on Women’s Policy develop collaborative efforts to increase the number of women applying to serve on Louisiana’s public boards and commissions, and to encourage more women to explore entering public service. The Louisiana Women’s Policy & Research Commission also requests that a section of the new Office on Women’s Policy web site be used to assist in launching collaborative efforts to raise awareness and provide information regarding opportunities for women to apply to serve on Louisiana’s public boards and commissions. Through the Office on Women’s Policy web site and other collectively orchestrated initiatives to help encourage more women to consider entering public service and applying to serve on boards and commissions, we hope to improve the percentage of women participating in public service in Louisiana.***

### **IV. Activities Undertaken by the Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission in 2012**

#### **A. Additional 2012 Louisiana Women’s Policy & Research Commission Activities**

To integrate action with the findings of research on the needs of women in respect to economic enhancement, the Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission partnered with the Louisiana Center for Women and Government to host the Louisiana Women Leaders Conference on Small Business Entrepreneurship May 3 - 4, 2012 in Baton Rouge. Additional partners included U. S. Chamber of Commerce Center for Women and Business, AT&T Louisiana, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana, Capital One Bank, Lafourche Parish Commission on Women, Louisiana Legislative Women’s Caucus, Louisiana Lottery, and the Demo Diva Demolition Company.

The conference’s mission was to provide information that would enhance life-altering decisions affecting the economic well-being of women. To this end, 30 speakers in 8 break-out sessions focused on legal, credit, financial, and technology issues, non-profit organization, small business healthcare as well as domestic violence’s effect on small businesses.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Sam Bacharach of Cornell University, founder of the Bacharach Leadership Group and author of more than 20 books (including *Get Them on Your Side*) added insight into organizational political competence. Moira Forbes, President and Publisher of *ForbesWoman*, provided candid view of non-traditional business opportunities. Joan Lunden, host of *Good Morning America* for nearly two decades, brought fresh and frank insight to a woman’s skill in re-inventing herself.

Honorary Chairs for the conference, attended by 200 Louisiana women statewide, were U. S. Senator Mary Landrieu (D) and Wendy Vitter (R). Ms. Vitter also provided commentary on the political climate and its effect on business. Dr. Laura Badeaux, acting Chair of The Louisiana Women’s Policy and Re-



search Commission and Chair of the Lafourche Commission on Women, coordinated the conference. The goal of the conference committee is to expand to a national conference in 2013 to engage more women from diverse backgrounds in dialogue which will assist Louisiana women in achieving best practices in entrepreneurship and economic enhancement.

## **B. Office on Women's Policy**

The new Executive Director of the Office on Women's Policy, Cordelia Heaney, began her position in September. For the upcoming year, the goals for the Office on Women's Policy include strengthening the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission by assisting with the recruitment of additional members and helping to build connections between regional women's commissions and the state-wide commission; increasing the Office on Women's Policy's visibility through outreach and establishing standing projects including a web site, grant writing collaborations, and a project to encourage more women to apply to serve on state boards and commissions; and building the Office on Women's Policy's partnership projects, like offering an internship and working with the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus on compiling updated lists of proposed bills that effect women.

## Appendices

### Appendix I.

#### Louisiana Women Workers: 2011

Compiled by Beth Willinger, PhD, October 2012<sup>xxxix</sup>

In 2011, the population of Louisiana reached an estimated 4,574,836 people, up slightly from a population of 4,544,228 in 2010, and up more than 105,000 from a population of 4,468,976 in 2000. Females outnumbered males and comprised 51.1 % of the population (2,338,719).

- Of the 1.85 million women age 16 years and over in Louisiana, 56.5 percent were labor force participants working full- or part-time, or looking for work in 2011; 59.1 percent of women workers were employed full-time, year-round.
- Women made up 44.7 percent of the full-time, year-round Louisiana labor force in 2011.
- An estimated 2,130 Louisiana women between the ages of 20 and 44 were serving in the Armed Forces.
- Louisiana women working full-time, year-round in 2011 earned on average \$31,862, making Louisiana 43rd lowest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Women's median annual earnings in only 8 other states were lower.

Nationally, women's median annual earnings were \$37,133. The highest paid women workers were in the District of Columbia (\$60,332); the lowest paid were in Mississippi (\$29,548).

In contrast, Louisiana men working year-round, full-time earned on average \$46,313 ranking Louisiana men 21st with average earnings greater than the earnings of men in 30 other states. Nationally, the median annual earnings for men in 2011 were \$46,993.

- In 2011, Louisiana women working full-time, year-round earned just 68.8 cents for every dollar earned by a Louisiana man, a gender wage gap of 31 percent. The great disparity in earnings between Louisiana women and men has consistently ranked Louisiana 49th or 50th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. In 2011, Louisiana was again 50th with only Wyoming having a larger wage gap (66.6). Nationally, the ratio was 77.0.
- 5.8% of Louisiana women who worked full-time, year-round had incomes below the poverty level compared to 3.2% of Louisiana men and 3.2% of women nationally.
- The highest levels of poverty were experienced by women in Mississippi (22.3%), followed by Louisiana (20.6%). Nationally, the average was 14.6%. Poverty in Louisiana is experienced primarily by female-headed families (50.3%), Native American women (35%), and black women (32.5%).<sup>xi</sup>
- Among the top earners in the state, 2.8% (17,869) of women who worked full-time, year-round earned \$100,000 or more compared to 12.1% (95,529) of men.
- The 2011 average earnings and the gender wage gap for Louisiana women and men differed significantly by race and ethnicity. Women of all races and ethnicities earned less than men of the same race and ethnicity. The largest wage gap was between white women and men (68.7%); the narrowest was between black women and men (82.6%). However, when compared to white men, the largest earnings gap was between white men and black women (51%).

White women earned on average \$35,454 compared to \$51,592 for white men for an earnings ratio of 68.7.

Black or African American women earned on average \$26,338 compared to \$31,901 for black or African American men for an earnings ratio of 82.6. The earnings ratio between black women and white men was 51.0.

Asian American women earned on average \$32,365 compared to \$42,977 for Asian American men for an earnings ratio of 75.3. The earnings ratio between Asian American women and white men was 62.7.

Hispanic or Latina women earned on average \$27,173 compared to \$35,437 for Hispanic or Latino men for an earnings ratio of 76.7. The earnings ratio between Hispanic or Latina women and white men was 52.7.

- Louisiana women and men are not paid equitably for their occupational achievements. In 2011, average earnings for women and men in the five major occupational categories showed the largest wage gap to be between women and men employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations with women earning just 51.7 cents for every dollar earned by men in those occupations.

Women in Management, business, science, and arts occupations earned on average \$43,697 compared to an average of \$65,306 for their male counterparts (wage gap 66.9);

Women in Service occupations earned \$20,391 compared to \$27,021 for men in Service occupations (wage gap 75.5);

Women in Sales and office occupations earned \$28,769 compared to \$44,228 for men in Sales and office occupations (wage gap 65.0);

Women in Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations earned \$34,692 compared to \$41,578 for their male counterparts (wage gap 83.4);

Women in Production, transportation, and material moving occupations earned \$21,898 compared to \$42,316 for men in the same occupations (wage gap 51.7).

- Among women employed full-time, year-round, 41.9 percent worked in Management, business, science and arts occupations; 34.9 percent worked in Sales and office occupations; 18.6 percent worked in Service occupations; 3.6 percent in Production, transportation, and material moving occupations; and 1 percent in Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.
- The largest percentage of employed white and Asian women worked in Management, business, science, and arts occupations (41.9% and 37.1% respectively); while the largest percentage of employed black women and Hispanic women worked in Service occupations (35.1% and 37.3% respectively). (Includes both part-time and full-time workers).

- The ten leading occupations of women employed full-time, year-round in 2011 and their average annual earnings:

Occupation	Total Employed	Annual Earnings
Office and administrative support	149,891	\$30,176
Sales and related occupations	66,080	25,064
Management occupations	55,655	43,509
Education, training, and library occupations	42,710	40,355
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners, and other technical	41,180	60,911
Business and financial operations	34,444	42,494
Food preparation and serving	30,339	17,646
Healthcare support occupations	29,026	22,190
Personal care and service	27,804	18,634
Health technologies and technicians	25,142	35,053

- Women made up 68.3 percent of all private not-for-profit wage and salary workers; 44.8 percent of private for-profit company employees; 64.7 percent of state government workers; 59.8 percent of local government workers; and 48.9 percent of Federal government workers. 27.1 percent of Louisiana women were self-employed in their own incorporated business while 34.6 percent were self-employed in their own not-incorporated business.
- As a class of workers, women working in the Federal government earned the highest wages with average annual earnings of \$43,117; while women who were self-employed in their own not-incorporated business earned the least with earnings of \$16,435.
- In 2011, the unemployment rate among women in the Louisiana labor force 16 years and over was 9 percent. Black women experienced the highest rates of unemployment at 12.5 percent, followed by Hispanic or Latinas at 10.4 percent, and white women at 7.1 percent. Asian women had the lowest rate of unemployment at 5.1 percent.
- Educational attainment is greater for Louisiana women than men 25 years old and over: 80.7 percent of men and 84.1 percent of women have completed high school (includes equivalency). The pattern continues at each level of education with 13.5 percent of men and 14.4 percent of women having completed a bachelor's degree; and 6.8 percent of men and 7.4 percent of women having obtained a graduate or professional degree.
- However, the parity between Louisiana women and men is only one side of the coin. In 2011, Louisiana was among the states having the lowest number of high school graduates. Only three states, California, Mississippi and Texas had lower rates of high school completion. Louisiana tied with Kentucky for 47th place for having the lowest proportion of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher. Only Arkansas, Mississippi and West Virginia had lower rates of college graduates.
- Louisiana women and men are not paid equitably for their educational attainment. Men who had not graduated high school earned \$11,118 more than women with the same education (\$24,017 compared to \$12,899); and \$3,711 more than women who graduated high school.

Men who graduated high school or equivalency earned on average \$36,079. Their earnings were \$15,773 more than the earnings of women high school graduates (\$20,306), and \$11,669 more than the earnings of women with some college or an associates degree (\$24,410).

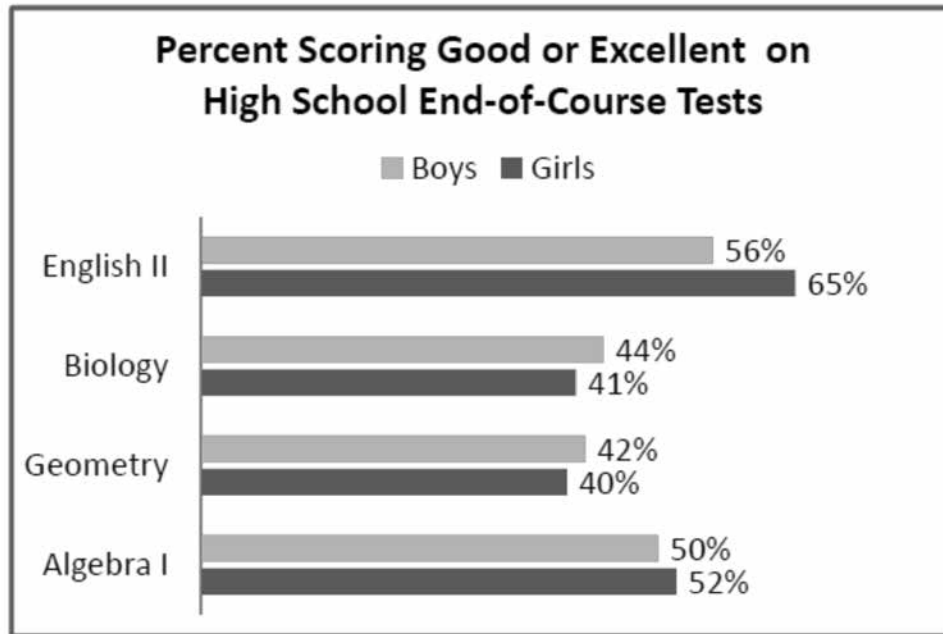
Men with some college or an associates degree earned \$41,646. Their earnings were \$17,236 more than the earnings of women with a comparable education and \$1,360 more than the earnings of women with a bachelor's degree (\$40,288). Men with a bachelor's degree earned \$55,523, \$15,237 more than women with a bachelor's degree and men with a graduate or profession degree earned \$23,196 more on average than women with a comparable education (\$72,003, and \$48,807 respectively).

- The poverty rate for Louisiana women and girls in 2011 was 20.6 percent, ranking Louisiana second only to Mississippi in having the highest rate of female poverty. Nationally, the poverty rate for women and girls was 14.6 percent. Poverty rates were highest in Louisiana for black females at 32.5 percent, followed by Hispanic females at 22.6 percent, Asian females at 19.9 percent, and white females at 14.9 percent.<sup>xli</sup>

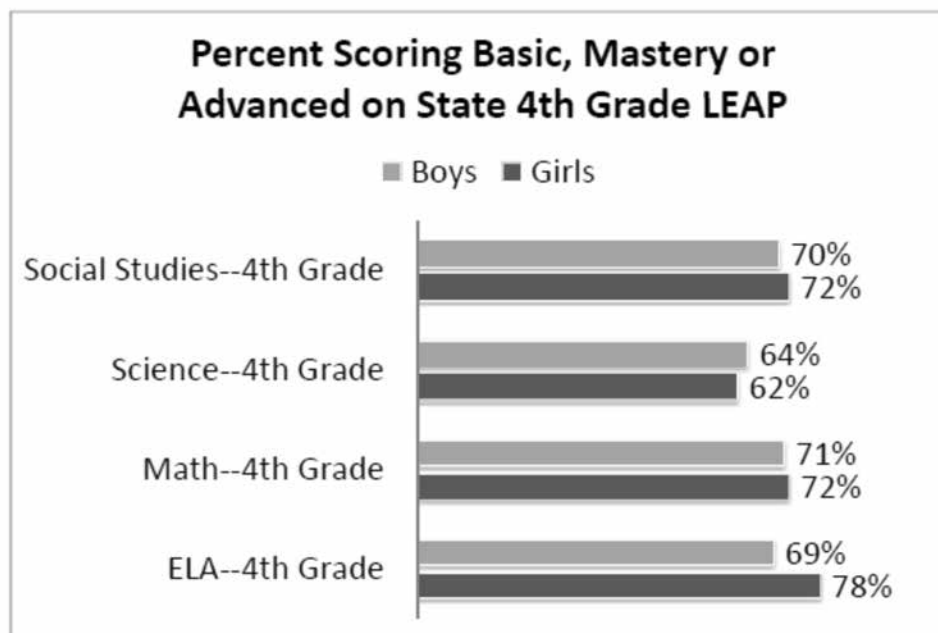
## Appendix II.

### Quick Facts on Education in Louisiana

Excerpted from the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus Foundation's Report on Louisiana Statistics  
Report on Women and Girls, 2012

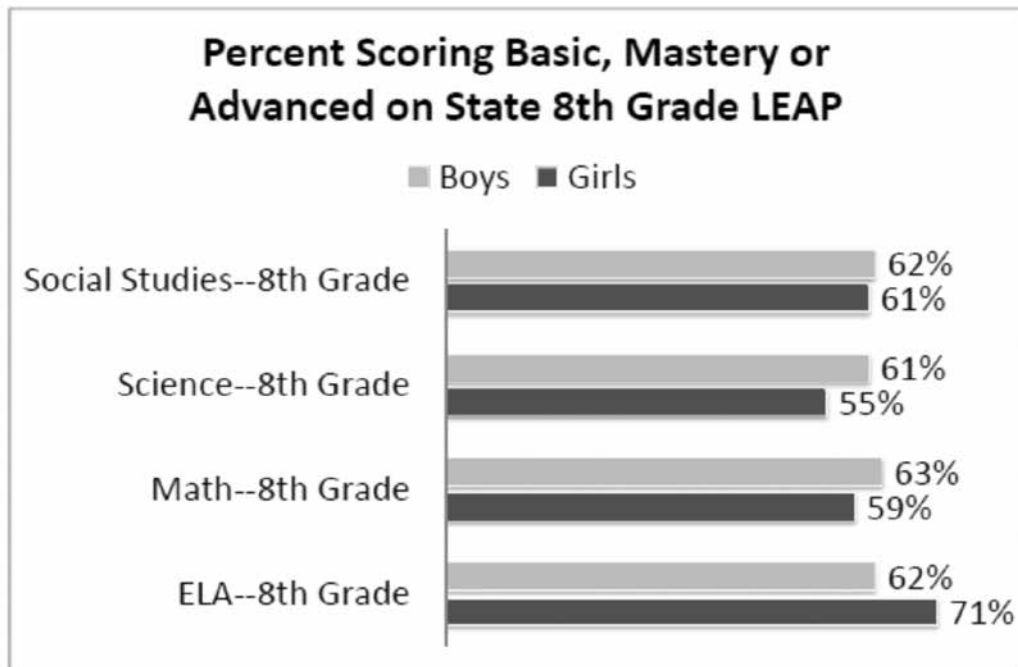


Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education, End-of-Course Tests State Subgroup Reports for December 2010 & May 2011 Combined

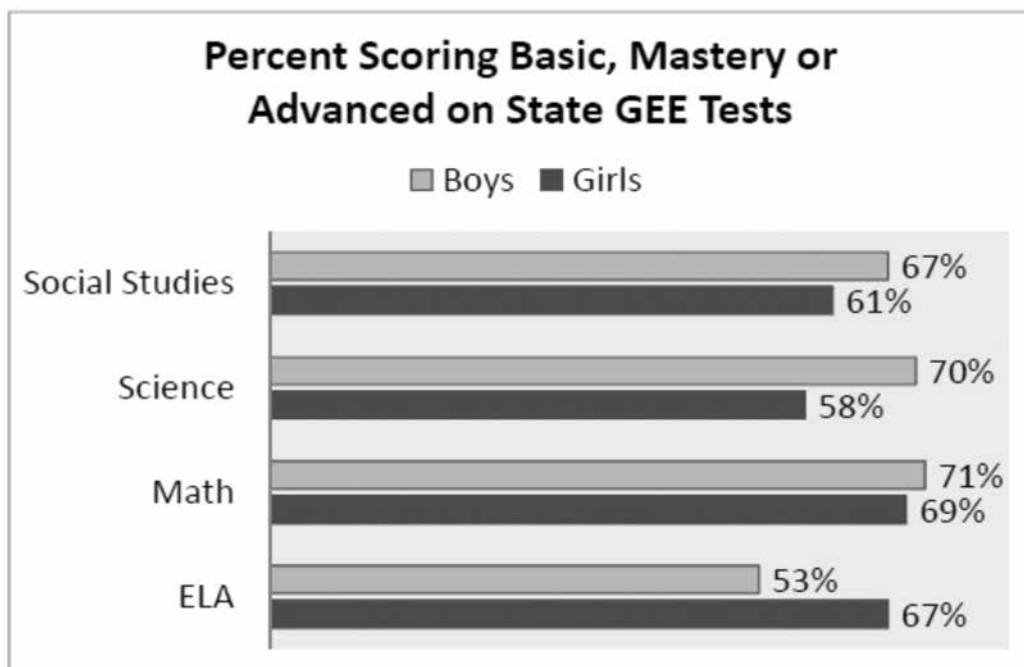


Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education, Spring 2011 Criterion-Referenced Test State Subgroup/Education Classification

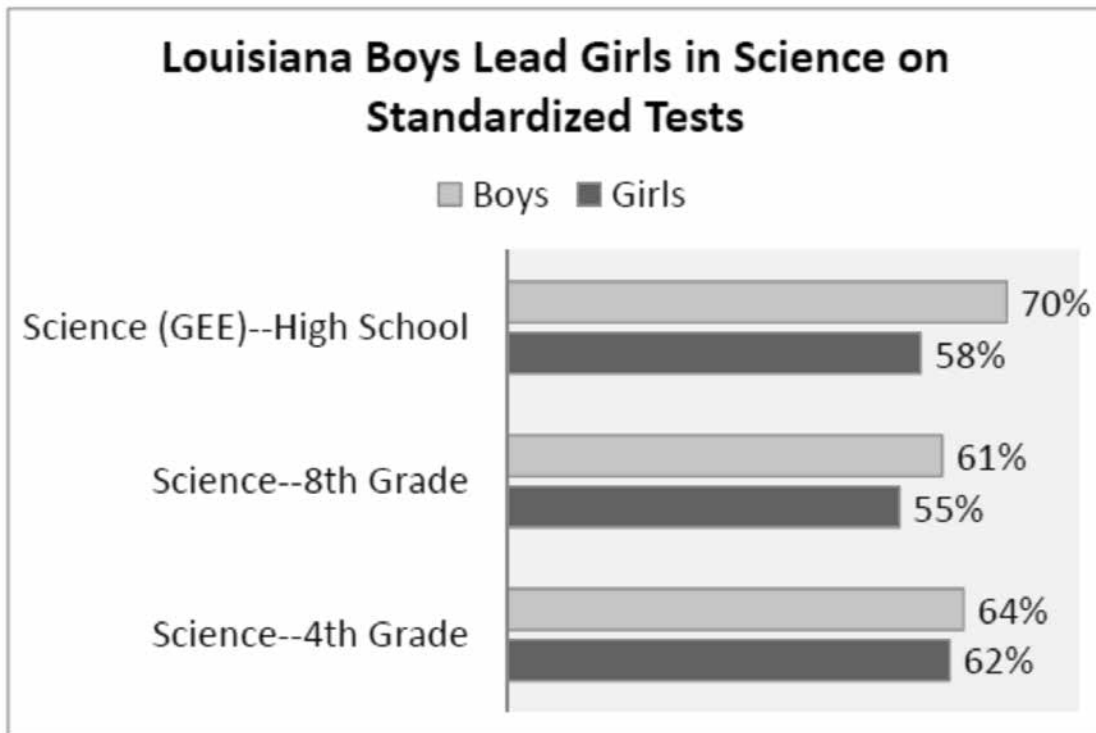




Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education, Spring 2011 Criterion-Referenced Test State Subgroup/Education Classification Report



Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education, Spring 2011 Criterion-Referenced Test State Subgroup/Education Classification Report--GEE

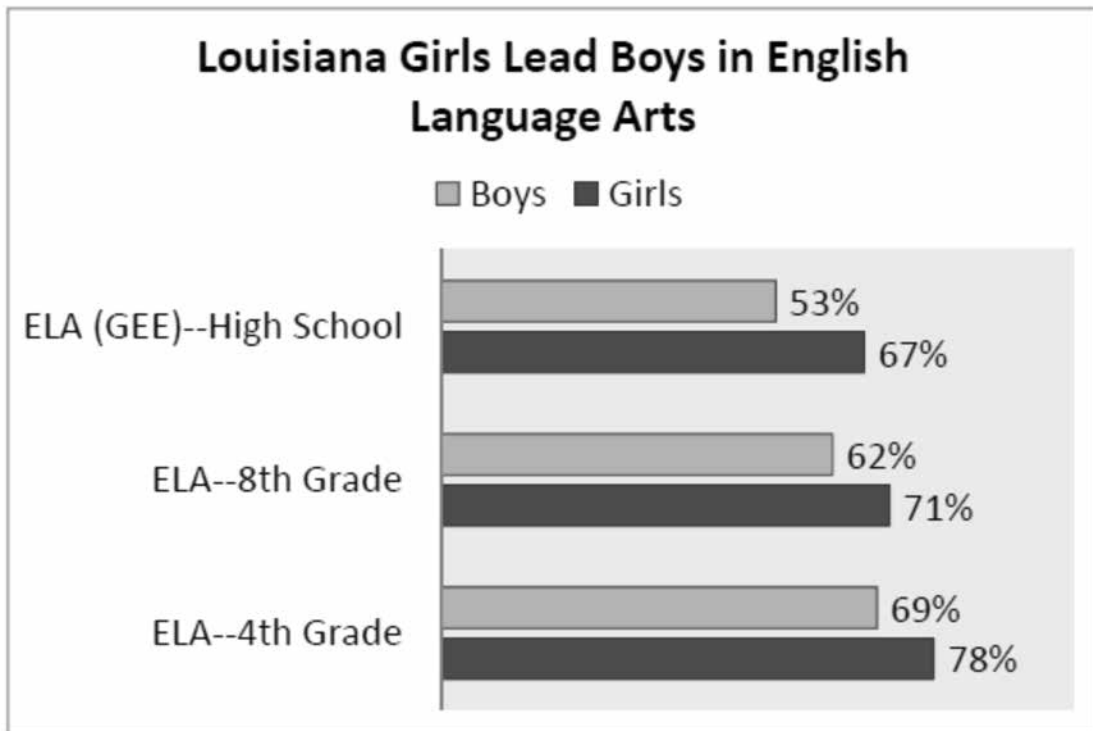


Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education, Spring 2011 Criterion-Referenced Test State Subgroup/Education Classification Report (LEAP and GEE Reports)

### Louisiana Boys Lead Girls in Mathematics on Standardized Tests in Later Years



Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education, Spring 2011 Criterion-Referenced Test State Subgroup/Education Classification Report (LEAP and GEE Reports)



Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women’s Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education, Spring 2011 Criterion-Referenced Test State Subgroup/Education Classification Report (LEAP and GEE Reports)

## Education Attainment

Ages	Women	Men
<b>Ages 25-34</b>		
High School or higher	88.2%	82%
Bachelor’s degree or higher	26.8%	21%
<b>Ages 35-44</b>		
High School or higher	88.8%	82.8%
Bachelor’s degree or higher	26.9%	19.5%
<b>Ages 45-65</b>		
High School or higher	86%	82.1%
Bachelor’s degree or higher	21.1%	19.7%
<b>Ages 65+</b>		
High School or higher	72.6%	73.2%
Bachelor’s degree or higher	14.3%	21.6%

Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women’s Caucus with information obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. (2011) American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>

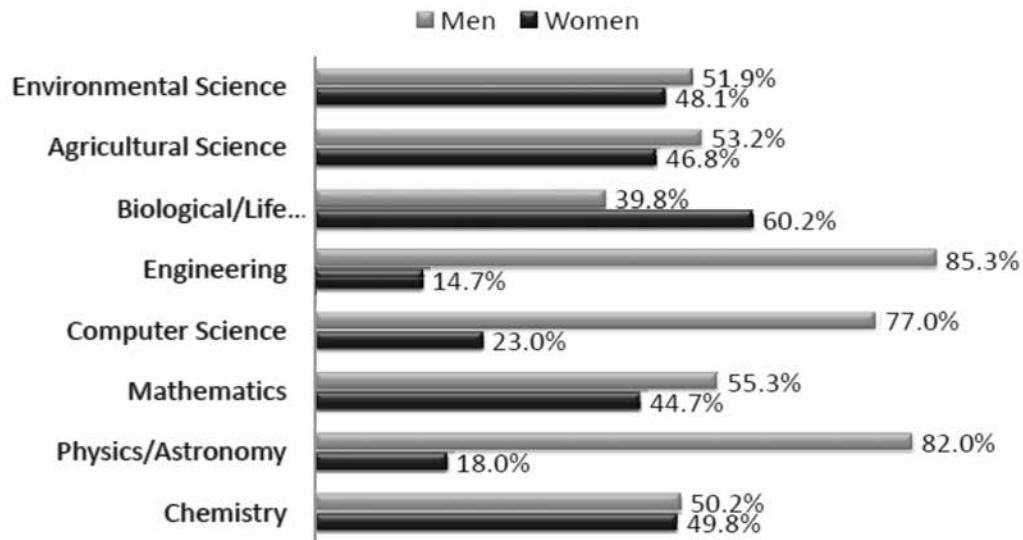
## 2011-2012 Degrees Awarded by Gender

**In 2011-12, Louisiana women earned more degrees than men in Louisiana.**



Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Board of Regents. (2012) 2011-2012 Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Degree Level, Race, Gender, Residency Public Institution Totals (CMPLRAX)

## 2011-2012 Math & Science Degrees Public Institutions



Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Board of Regents. (2012) 2011-2012 Math and Science Degrees and Certificates Awarded Public Institutions Totals (CMPLLAMP)

## Appendix III.

### Public Service and Louisiana Women

Excerpted from the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus Foundation's Report on Louisiana Statistics Report on Women and Girls, 2012

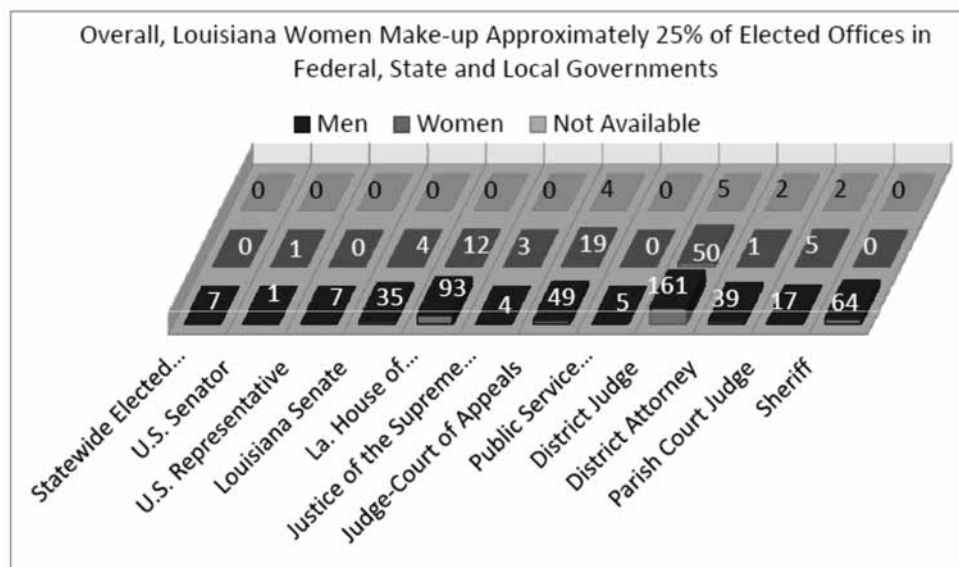
## Louisiana Legislature Committees

Note: The committees include only those listed in the Louisiana Legislature's Leginfo Database and may not reflect all committees listed on the Louisiana Legislatures website.

Committee	Total # of Committees	# of Committees with Zero Women	# of Committees with Women as Chair	# of Committees with Women as Vice Chair
House	25	4	1	4
Senate	24	10	3	2
Joint	6	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

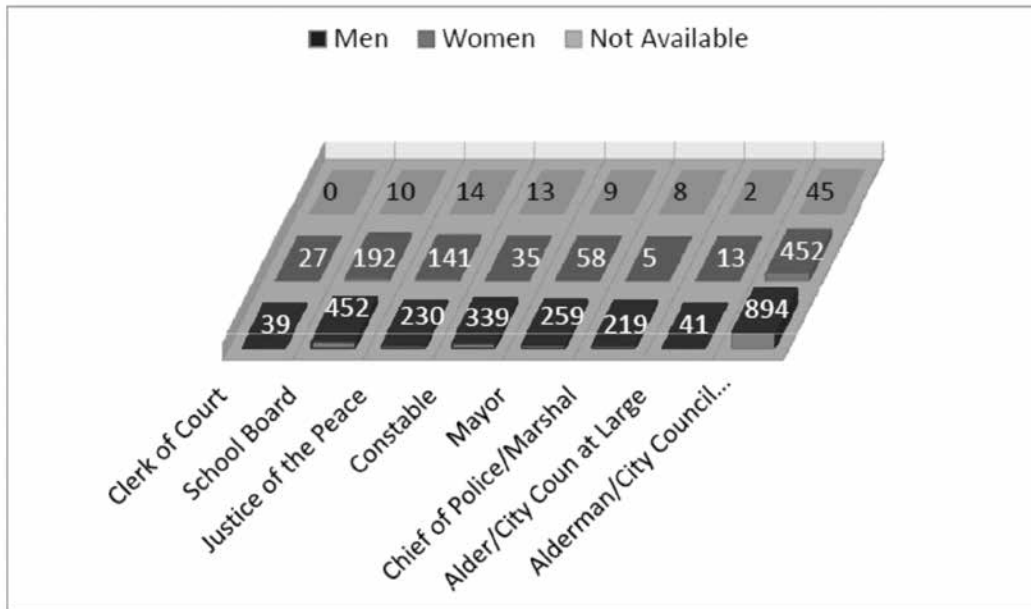
Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Legislature, LegInfo Database, Chairman/Vice Chair Report (10/4/2012).

## Public Sector-Elected Officials



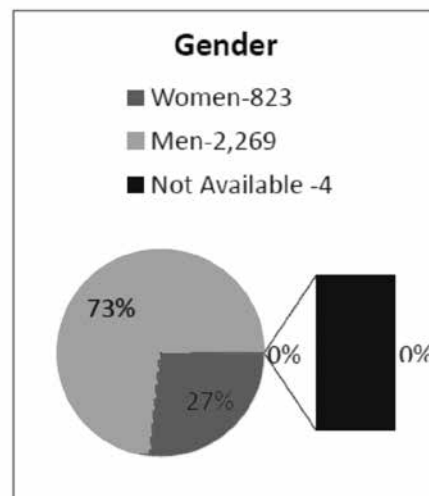
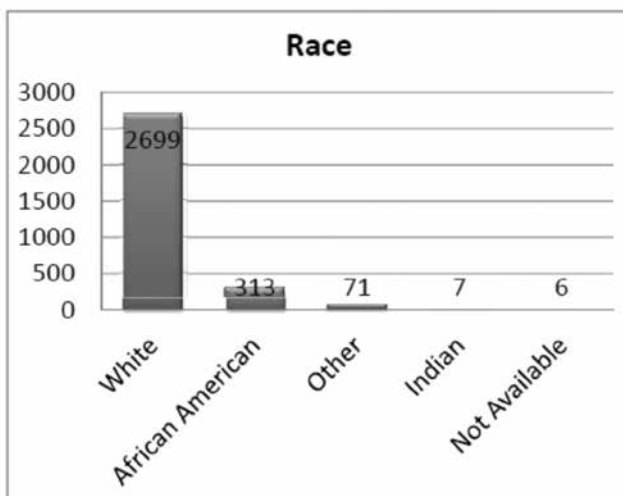
Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Secretary of State's Office, Commissions Division, Report from ERIN Database, October 12, 2012.

# Public Sector-Elected Officials



Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Secretary of State's Office, Commissions Division Report from ERIN Database, October 12, 2012.

# Louisiana Public Boards and Commissions



Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Senate Office, August 3, 2012



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### **Louisiana Board of Regents**

**Louisiana Center for Women and Government, Nicholls State University**

**Louisiana Department of Administration**

**Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services**

**Louisiana Department of Economic Development**

**Louisiana Department of Education**

**Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals**

**Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus**

**Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus Foundation**

**Louisiana Workforce Commission**

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## End Notes

- <sup>i</sup> “Louisiana: Teen Birth Rate per 1,000 Population Ages 15-19, 2010”. State Health Facts. Kaiser Family Foundation. n.d. 3 December 2012.
- <sup>ii</sup> “Family Planning”. *Center for Community and Preventative Health*. Department of Health and Hospitals. Accessed at <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/977> on March 13, 2013 3:30 PM.
- <sup>iii</sup> “Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Louisiana 2010 Annual Report”. *Louisiana STD/HIV Program*. Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Public Health. n.d. 3 December 2012
- <sup>iv</sup> “2010 STD/HIV Program Report”. Louisiana STD/HIV Program. Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Public Health. n.d. 3 December 2012
- <sup>v</sup> Data on 4- and 5-star jobs was compiled from the Louisiana Star Jobs Website (<http://www.laworks.net/Stars/default.aspx>) in November 2012 by Cordelia Heaney, Executive Director, Office on Women’s Policy, and compared to American Community Survey 2011 data from Trin Johnson, Executive Director, Louisiana Legislative Women’s Caucus
- <sup>vi</sup> Louisiana Board of Regents. (2012) 2011-2012 Math and Science Degrees and Certificates Awarded Public Institutions Totals (CMPLLAMP), from the Louisiana Legislative Women’s Caucus Foundation’s Report on Louisiana Statistics Report on Women and Girls 2012.
- <sup>vii</sup> Rutgers Center for American Women in Politics, “State Fact Sheet – Louisiana” [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/resources/state\\_fact\\_sheet.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/resources/state_fact_sheet.php), [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/resources/state\\_fact\\_sheets/LA.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/resources/state_fact_sheets/LA.php) and “Women in State Legislatures: 2013” <http://visual.ly/women-state-legislatures-2013>
- <sup>viii</sup> Source: “Protected Innocence Challenge: State Report Cards on the Legal Framework of Protection for the Nation’s Children 2012” [http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/ProtectedInnocenceChallenge\\_FINAL\\_2012\\_wcover\\_web.pdf](http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/ProtectedInnocenceChallenge_FINAL_2012_wcover_web.pdf)
- <sup>ix</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011
- <sup>x</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Compressed Mortality File 1999-2009. CDC WONDER Online Database, compiled from Compressed Mortality File 1999-2009 Series 20 No. 20, 2012. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/cmfi-icd10.html> on Dec 4, 2012 9:30:21 AM
- <sup>xi</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011.
- <sup>xii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Obesity Percentage of Women, 2009. Accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/atlas/countydata/atlas.html> on March 13, 2013 11:40 AM.
- <sup>xiii</sup> “Louisiana: Teen Birth Rate per 1,000 Population Ages 15-19, 2010”. *State Health Facts*. Kaiser Family Foundation. n.d. 3 December 2012.
- <sup>xiv</sup> “Live Births by Place of Occurrence, Reallocated to Mother’s Usual Residence and Shown by Age and Race of Mother Louisiana, 2009”. *LA Vital Records*. Department of Health and Hospitals. n.d. 3 December 2012.
- <sup>xv</sup> “Live Births by Place of Occurrence, Reallocated to Mother’s Usual Residence and Shown by Age and Race of Mother Louisiana, 2008”. *LA Vital Records*. Department of Health and Hospitals. n.d. 3 December 2012.
- <sup>xvi</sup> “Counting it Up: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing in Louisiana in 2008”. *Counting it Up: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing*. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. June, 2011. 3 December 2012.
- <sup>xvii</sup> “Family Planning”. *Center for Community and Preventative Health*. Department of Health and Hospitals. n.d. 3 December 2012.
- <sup>xviii</sup> “Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Louisiana 2010 Annual Report”. *Louisiana STD/HIV Program*. Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Public Health. n.d. 3 December 2012.

xix "2010 STD/HIV Program Report". *Louisiana STD/HIV Program*. Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Public Health. n.d. 3 December 2012.

xx Ibid xix

xxi Ibid xix

xxii Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Public Health. Accessed at <http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/977> on March 13, 2013, 11:45 AM.

xxiii "Family Planning". *Center for Community and Preventative Health*. Department of Health and Hospitals. n.d. 3 December 2012.

xxiv Violence Policy Center, "When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2010 Data." pp. 5 and 19

xxv Arias I, Corso P. 2005. Average Cost Per Person Victimized by an Intimate Partner of the Opposite Gender: a Comparison of Men and Women. *Violence and Victims*, 20(4):379-91. Accessed at [http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/HealthCare/Health\\_Care\\_Costs\\_of\\_Domestic\\_and\\_Sexual\\_Violence.pdf](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/HealthCare/Health_Care_Costs_of_Domestic_and_Sexual_Violence.pdf) on March 13, 2013, 11:52 AM.

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xxviii Data on 4- and 5-star jobs was compiled from the Louisiana Star Jobs Website (<http://www.laworks.net/Stars/default.aspx>) in November 2012 by Cordelia Heaney, Executive Director, Office on Women's Policy, and compared to American Community Survey 2011 data from Trin Johnson, Executive Director, Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus.

xxix Ibid xxiii

xxx See Appendix I, Louisiana Women Workers: 2011

xxxi Louisiana Department of Education, Spring 2011 Criterion-Referenced Test State Subgroup/Education Classification Report (LEAP and GEE Reports), from Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus Foundation's Report on Louisiana Statistics Report on Women and Girls 2012.

xxxii Louisiana Board of Regents. (2012) 2011-2012 Math and Science Degrees and Certificates Awarded Public Institutions Totals (CMPLLAMP), from the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus Foundation's Report on Louisiana Statistics Report on Women and Girls 2012.

xxxiii Rutgers Center for American Women in Politics, "State Fact Sheet – Louisiana" [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/resources/state\\_fact\\_sheet.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/resources/state_fact_sheet.php), [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/resources/state\\_fact\\_sheets/LA.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/resources/state_fact_sheets/LA.php) and "Women in State Legislatures: 2013" <http://visual.ly/women-state-legislatures-2013>. All links accessed on March 13, 2013, 12:00 PM.

xxxiv Source: "Protected Innocence Challenge: State Report Cards on the Legal Framework of Protection for the Nation's Children 2012" Accessed at [http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/ProtectedInnocenceChallenge\\_FINAL\\_2012\\_wcover\\_web.pdf](http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/ProtectedInnocenceChallenge_FINAL_2012_wcover_web.pdf) on March 13, 2013, 12:00 PM.

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<sup>xxxix</sup> All findings are based on the U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey, 1 year estimates unless otherwise noted. Data for 2011 was released in September 2012. All named categories, such as those used for occupations and race, are those used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Tables references: B20004; B20005; B17004; B19326; B24010A,B,D, I; B24020; S0201; S2301; S2402; S2409; C15002; C23001; C23002A, B, D, I; C23022; S1501; R1501; R1502; R2001; R2002. Institute for Women's Policy Research, "The Gender Wage Gap in New York State and Its Solutions," 2011. Available at [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org)

<sup>xl</sup> National Women's Policy Center, "Poverty Rates by State." [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org)

<sup>xli</sup> National Women's Law Center, "Poverty Rates by State, 2011." [www.nwlc.org/resource/poverty-rates-state-2011](http://www.nwlc.org/resource/poverty-rates-state-2011)