

Louisiana Federation of Teachers

Weekly Legislative Digest

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2016 Regular Legislative Session

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They're baaack.....

The late, great political reporter John Maginnis once quipped about a lackluster legislative session, "They could have done less, but they ran out of time."

On Thursday at 6:00 P.M., the House of Representatives let time slip by without approving the state's \$29 billion budget. That triggered a special session, ordered by Gov. John Bel Edwards and gaveled into session just 30 minutes after the failed regular session.

Following the collapse of the legislative session, Gov. John Bel Edwards said, "We just witnessed an epic failure in leadership. The budget agreement was not met and we're now headed into an unnecessary and costly special session where the options before them won't be any different than they were this time."

Failure to adopt a budget came when leaders of the Republican majority in the House of Representatives refused to agree with a Senate version that would fully fund higher education, TOPS, and the MFP.

When House Democrats attempted to force a vote on the Senate version of the budget, they were blocked by Speaker Taylor Barras (R-New Iberia). Rep. Barras and Rep. Cameron Henry (R-Metairie), who chairs the House Appropriations Committee, led the charge against the Senate plan.

Speaker Barras quickly left the chamber after the session closed, ducking questions from reporters. For his part, Rep. Henry blamed Gov. Edwards for the debacle, saying "The governor hasn't moved one inch on anything."

Lawmakers opened the special session at the appointed hour, but quickly adjourned until next week. The House will meet on Monday; the Senate won't convene until Wednesday.

What passed, and what didn't

The LFT legislative team is compiling the vote tallies on bills of interest during the 2017 Regular Legislative Session, and will have a full report soon.