

Caleb Wilson Hazing Prevention Task Force

Thursday, August 28, 2025

10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

House Committee Room 5

State Capitol

900 North 3rd Street

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

CALL TO ORDER

Rep. Jason Hughes called the September meeting of the Caleb Wilson Hazing Prevention Task Force to order at 10:04 a.m.

ROLL CALL & INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Allison Smith called the roll and a quorum was established.

Members Present	Affiliation
Rep. Jason Hughes, Chair	State Representative
Rep. Joseph Stagni	State Representative
Rep. Vanessa LaFleur	State Representative
Rep. Rashid Young	State Representative
Rep. Tehmi Chassion	State Representative
Sen. Gerald Boudreaux, Vice Chair	State Senator
Sen. Edward Price	State Senator
Julie Ralph	Office of Attorney General Liz Murrill
Maj. Nicole Kilgore	Louisiana State Police
Dr. Kim Hunter Reed	Commissioner of Higher Education
Pamela Williams	Northshore Technical Community College
Connor Goodly	Southern University & A&M College
Dr. Amy Cable	Louisiana Community & Technical College System
Dr. Fran'Cee Brown-McClure	Louisiana State University & A&M College
Dr. Winton Anderson	Southern University & A&M College
Alicia Mitchell	University of Louisiana at Monroe
Dr. Jim Carlson	River Parishes Community College
Trey Jones, JD	Louisiana State University & A&M College
Corinne M. Blache, JD	Southern University System
Members Not Present	Affiliation
Rep. Delisha Boyd	State Representative
Rep. John Wyble	State Representative
Sen. Larry Selders	State Senator
Sen. Kirk Talbot	State Senator
Brennan Belanger	Louisiana State University & A&M College

Nyic'Quavayion Willis	Grambling State University
Dr. Marcus Jones	University of Louisiana System

Rep. Hughes welcomed attendees, thanked the Board of Regents for organizing the meeting, and acknowledged Sen. Boudreaux as Vice Chair. Task Force members introduced themselves and voiced support for the mission of the body. Rep. Hughes then introduced the family of Mr. Caleb Wilson. Ms. Urania Wilson thanked the Task Force and stressed the importance of accountability in schools and organizations. Mr. Corey Wilson, Sr. and Mr. Cory Wilson, Jr. also expressed gratitude and urged the Task Force to lead by example in ending hazing.

BOARD OF REGENTS UPDATES: STATE & FEDERAL LAWS

Rep. Hughes acknowledged Rep. Delisha Boyd and her leadership on hazing legislation which includes Act 174, signed into law this past session by Governor Landry. Rep. Hughes asked Ms. Uma Subramanian, General Counsel, and Dr. Allison Smith, Assistant Commissioner for Student Health and Wellness, both at the Board of Regents, to give a history of this act and set a foundation for the work ahead.

The Task Force created by HCR 37 aims to develop actionable strategies to prevent hazing. Dr. Smith and Ms. Subramanian outlined the evolution of Louisiana's anti-hazing laws, beginning with the 2018 Max Gruver Act, which prohibited hazing, imposed penalties, mandated training, and required standardized reporting across institutions. Subsequent laws established during 2019–2025 increased transparency, due process, accountability, and mandated organizational termination for hazing violations. Dr. Smith and Ms. Brianna Golden Phillips shared that, at the federal level, the Stop Campus Hazing Act of 2024 expanded the Clery Act to include hazing data and required institutions to publish a Campus Hazing Transparency Report

which covers both on- and off-campus incidents, with reporting beginning in late 2025 and in 2026.

The Task Force members, including Sen. Boudreaux and Rep. Hughes, emphasized that despite strong laws, hazing persists. They called for a shift from reactive reporting to proactive prevention, requiring ongoing education and accountability beyond orientation. Rep. Hughes proposed considering financial penalties for institutions tied to hazing incidents to encourage stronger year-round prevention efforts. The Task Force agreed that all institutions must take a more active role in preventing hazing, closing legal gaps, and providing full transparency and accountability.

Rep. LaFleur sought clarification on the definition of mandatory reporters, which was confirmed to include anyone aware of a hazing incident, regardless of their role, with criminal penalties for failure to report. A discussion was held on the term "organization," and it was noted that the law broadly defines organizations to include any student-led group. Rep. Hughes and Rep. Stagni indicated that while institutions are not currently held legally liable for hazing by student organizations, the Task Force had acknowledged this as a gap needing further review.

Rep. Stagni emphasized that despite the strong 2018 Max Gruver Act, over 37 hazing incidents have occurred since this Act was passed, highlighting the need to shift from reporting to prevention, especially during any initiation processes. He called for institutions to track participants, including non-students, and enforce accountability. Dr. Smith stated that Act 174, written by Rep. Boyd, now requires two hours of hazing education and mandates suspension or expulsion of organizations that fail to comply, strengthening institutional enforcement authority. Rep. Hughes requested reassurance that the Omega Phi chapter at Southern University A&M is perpetually banned from returning.

Dr. Smith reported that when Louisiana's initial hazing law passed, the Board of Regents offered a free one-hour training, developed with StopHazing.org and the Gruver family, to help institutions meet the requirement. Act 174, effective as of August 1, 2025, now requires students to complete two hours of hazing prevention training. She added that the Board of Regents is developing a free statewide training for release in Spring 2026, to be made available to all student organizations. While some groups like Greek life and athletics may already have training, this ensures coverage for all student organizations as required but the new law.

Dr. Smith added that the Board of Regents is working to update the hazing reporting form used by institutions to improve accuracy and speed in reporting. She noted that institutions are expected to provide multiple reporting avenues including online, anonymous, in-person, and by phone. She emphasized that if an organization fails to meet the training requirement, they can now be expelled, and the institution must report that to the Legislature. Relevant case details, excluding FERPA/HIPAA-protected info, must be published online via the Campus Hazing Transparency Report, creating a public record for each organization. Task Force members emphasized the need for annual, mandatory hazing training for all students, not just organization members, similar to annual sexual harassment training, suggesting penalties for non-compliance and interactive online modules to increase effectiveness and accountability.

Rep. Hughes thanked those who participated in the discussion, reminding the Task Force members to ask questions as needed.

POSTSECONDARY SYSTEM UPDATES

Rep. Hughes introduced Dr. Amy Cable, Chief Student Affairs Officer of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) to provide the system report. Dr. Cable reported that LCTCS has had zero hazing incidents since 2018, largely due to its commuter-

based model and older student population. She outlined LCTCS's anti-hazing policies, noting that policy 2.003 prohibits hazing and mandates annual prevention training and policy 2.004 covers student conduct and due process procedures. She added that all hazing reports are tracked through Maxient, and reports can be provided in person or online.

Dr. Cable stated that LCTCS has about 100 registered organizations with 2,500 participants, all of whom complete mandatory hazing training via platforms like Canvas. Training is also integrated into orientation, seminars, and campus events, with compliance tracked by various offices depending on institution size. Dr. Cable highlighted the disciplinary actions organizations face for violations, including loss of recognition, event restrictions, and expulsion. She emphasized the need for:

- A uniform, statewide hazing prevention training module, with administrative access for oversight
- Interactive simulations to enhance training impact
- Stronger accountability for national organizations that oversee student groups
- Shifts toward culture change, with more focus on alcohol and opioid education, and prevention, and not just training and reporting.

Dr. Cable introduced Dr. Jim Carlson, the Chancellor of Northshore Technical Community College. Dr. Carlson stated that Northshore Technical Community College has five campuses across five parishes, making online training essential for accessibility. He added that while hazing is less likely due to the largely working commuter student population, annual training is still provided for Student Government Association and Phi Theta Kappa advisors. Dr. Carlson emphasized the importance of prevention through early education, even for students not in organizations, to prepare them before they transfer to four-year institutions. He supported creating a universal hazing prevention platform and invited student representative Pamela Williams to share her experience with training. Ms. Williams indicated that training has been

easily accessible through Canvas and is integrated in the system alongside regular coursework. She expressed support for a universal, user-friendly training platform, noting it is especially valuable in helping busy students complete the training on time.

Rep. Hughes expressed concern that institutional responses to hazing are currently discretionary, allowing suspension or expulsion based on severity. He urged the Task Force to consider a zero-tolerance approach, emphasizing that any form of hazing should result in immediate expulsion to truly eradicate it.

He introduced Mr. Trey Jones, the general counsel for the LSU System, along with Dr. Fran' Cee Brown-McClure, the Dean of Students and Associate Vice President. Mr. Jones stated that the LSU System has over 60,000 students across eight campuses, including online. He noted that all hazing-related incidents since 2018, aside from one uncorroborated report at LSU-Alexandria, occurred on the Baton Rouge campus. He added that the LSU System is exploring how hazing laws apply to online-only students.

Dr. Brown-McClure stated that since 2018 LSU has received 118 hazing reports, though not all resulted in responsible findings. She added that sanctions range from educational interventions to suspensions and expulsions for individuals or organizations. Dr. McClure described LSU's reporting process, which begins with determining if there is a criminal element; if so, law enforcement investigates before the university resumes internal proceedings. If not, cases are reviewed by Student Advocacy and Accountability. She stated that LSU institutions offer multiple reporting methods, including anonymous submissions.

Dr. Brown-McClure added that training compliance is monitored by each respective organization unit (Greek Life, Athletics, Band, etc.). She emphasized that if organizations or students fail to complete required hazing training, they lose privileges such as their student

organization status or revenue shares for athletes. The LSU System supports the idea of adding tools like RealResponse for easier reporting and is calling for more staffing, more funding, and a broader cultural shift, including beginning hazing prevention training in K–12 education and not at the college level.

Rep. Hughes raised concerns over whether coaches' discretion over athlete eligibility based on hazing training feeds a dangerous perception that Louisiana values athletics or organizations more than human life and called for mandatory enforcement rather than coach or advisor discretion when training is not completed. He then asked for clarification on how it is determined whether an individual or an organization is culpable. Dr. Brown-McClure described how responsibility is assigned, stating that after an investigation, if hazing is found to be the result of individuals acting independently without organizational knowledge, sanction, or involvement, then only the individuals are held responsible. She emphasized that if the behavior reflects a pattern within the organization or occurred with the organization's knowledge or oversight, the organization is held accountable.

Mr. Jones noted that a barrier to addressing hazing is the high burden of proof that may complicate investigations and limit findings of responsibility. He noted that without clearly compromising evidence investigators face challenges even initiating cases. Rep. Hughes stressed his belief that holding organizations, not just individuals, accountable may drive meaningful culture change within groups and encourage them to take internal enforcement more seriously. Sen. Price emphasized the need to address hazing culture early, noting that it often begins in the K-12 environment. He stressed that students may be socialized to see hazing as acceptable and called for the Task Force to prioritize culture change in and beyond higher education.

Sen. Boudreaux asked how many of the 118 hazing reports at LSU A&M since passage of the 2018 Max Gruver Act were substantiated and why hazing still exists at the institution. Mr. Jones noted that most of the reports were unsubstantiated, often due to anonymous tips lacking detail, evidence, or reports that did not meet the definition of hazing. He reiterated the difficulty of meeting the clear and convincing burden of proof, which hinders investigations. Mr. Jones noted that cultural persistence and challenges in gathering actionable evidence may contribute to the continuation of hazing.

Dr. Brown-McClure stated that through her conversations with students, many 18-22-year-olds struggle to believe hazing could happen to them. They often view past incidents as isolated or the result of others' mistakes. She noted that despite ongoing education efforts students tend to see hazing as abstract or distant, even after tragedies. This disconnect makes it difficult to instill a sense of personal risk and responsibility, though educators emphasize that any group could be next.

Rep. Tehmi Chassion shared his college experiences and emphasized that hazing culture is deeply rooted and widespread, from new members to alumni, and is often treated as a secret rite of passage. He added that despite awareness hazing persists due to peer pressure, fear of retaliation, and lack of real consequences. He advocated for:

- True zero-tolerance policies: automatic expulsion, organizational bans, and criminal charges
- Real-time, anonymous reporting tools (e.g., Crime Stoppers model) with swift follow-up
- Mandatory education for all members and administrators
- Adoption of a unified statewide policy rather than inconsistent institution-by-institution approaches

He stated that to create meaningful culture change hazing must ultimately be addressed from both the ground up and the top down, with consistent, harsh consequences.

Rep. Hughes invited the Southern University System to the table and introduced Ms. Corinne Blache, General Counsel to the System and Board of Supervisors for the Southern University System, and Dr. Winton Anderson, Director of Student Leadership and Engagement at Southern University and A&M College. Ms. Blache stated that since 2018 the Southern University System has had eight hazing incidents with consequences ranging from probation to expulsions for both students and organizations. Ms. Blache noted that all incidents occurred on the Baton Rouge campus except for one incident that occurred on the New Orleans campus. She added that the institution uses the Maxient platform, which is accessible to students, staff, and the public, for anonymous reporting. Ms. Blache described the investigation process:

- Institutional review of evidence
- Notifications sent to parties involved
- Option for accused to accept responsibility or proceed to a hearing
- Hearings judged under a clear and convincing standard
- Sanctions issued and appeals allowed for limited reasons (new evidence, contradictory information, or due process issues)

Rep. Hughes questioned Southern University's report of 920 students in organizations, suggesting it is low given the undergraduate population of 4,600–4,700 students. Dr. Anderson clarified that this number excludes sponsored groups like band and football, which are considered “sponsored organizations” as opposed to traditional registered student organizations. Rep. Hughes requested updated data including all undergraduate organizations be provided at the next Task Force meeting.

Rep. Lafleur asked for clarification of terms “institutional prosecutor” and “Community Standards Review Board” mentioned in the Southern University System presentations. Ms. Blache responded that the institutional prosecutor is a trained university employee who presents cases in student conduct hearings. The Community Standards Review Board is comprised of rotating faculty, staff, and students trained to serve in this role. Rep. Hughes raised concerns

about the prosecutor's qualifications and questioned the reliability of training attendance tracking, noting sign-in sheets can easily be falsified. He stressed that institutions should enforce accountability by revoking organizational recognition or student participation for failure to comply with training requirements. Dr. Anderson noted that some organizations have a check-in and check-out process, with students scanning their IDs to verify attendance.

Dr. Anderson stated that after working with student organizations for 15 years he has noticed that when incidents occur, people often seek information from outsiders, bypassing those who directly work with students. Between 2019 and 2022, legislation removed practitioners' authority to conduct their own interviews, which are crucial points of impact and trust with students. He added that those who work with students can only issue cease-and-desist orders and must wait for the process to unfold, which can take months or even a year. He urged the Task Force to consider restoring authority to practitioners who engage with students daily.

Ms. Williams added that students who report hazing should receive immunity from punishment for doing the right thing. She also expressed support for mandatory training for all student organizations, possibly through Canvas or a two-credit course. She agreed with Dr. Cable's idea of hazing simulations, comparing them to impactful drunk driving simulations shown in high school. She added that extending training in college and including K-12 campuses would proactively help prevent hazing.

Mr. Connor Goodly asked for clarification regarding the data, asking for information dated before 2018, which he felt necessary to measure true progress. He noted that COVID-19 affected campus activity and suggested tracking data by semester rather than year would be more accurate. Dr. Smith clarified that before 2018 Louisiana had no uniform hazing definition, so

data varied. Although raw data could be obtained, it would not be an accurate comparison for use across institutions or systems.

Rep. Hughes noted the meeting was approaching the scheduled end time and stated that the UL System would present at the September meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Rep. Hughes noted that the next meeting is Tuesday, September 16, 2:30–4:00 p.m. He added that the day also would include a Hazing Prevention Summit, scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Pennington Conference Center. He encouraged everyone to share these meetings with members of their institutions, especially students. He noted that National Hazing Prevention Week is September 22–26, with more information available via the QR code.

NEXT STEPS & ADJOURNMENT

Rep. Hughes thanked the members for their participation. He noted that the Task Force has laid a good foundation for their continued work. He expressed his appreciation to the Wilson family for their presence and his hope that the members let Caleb's story guide the Task Force's work. He then thanked the Commissioner, Regents staff, and all participants who traveled to join the meeting.

On motion of Sen. Boudreaux, and without objection, Rep. Hughes adjourned the meeting at 12:11 p.m.

ADDITIONAL GUESTS

Misti S. Cordell - Chair, Board of Regents

Erica Calais - University of Louisiana System

Pamela Williams - Northshore Technical Community College

Sydney Epps - Epps Educational Computing

Jeremiah Sams – Southern University System