

Caleb Wilson Hazing Prevention Task Force

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

2:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

Conference Center
Pennington Biomedical Research Center
6400 Perkins Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

CALL TO ORDER

Representative Jason Hughes called the September meeting of the Caleb Wilson Hazing Prevention Task Force to order at 2:37 p.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. Delisha Boyd	State Representative
Rep. Joseph Stagni	State Representative
Rep. Vanessa LaFleur	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
Nyic'Quavayion Willis	Grambling State University
Dr. Amy Cable	Louisiana Community & Technical College
Dr. Fran'Cee Brown-McClure	Louisiana State University
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
Corinne M. Blache, JD	Southern University System
Dr. Erica Calais	University of Louisiana System
Members Not Present	Affiliation
Rep. John Wyble	State Representative
Rep. Rashid Young	State Representative
Rep. Tehmi Chassion	State Representative
Sen. Larry Selders	State Senator
Sen. Kirk Talbot	State Senator
Pamela Williams	Northshore Technical Community College

Brennan Belanger	Louisiana State University
Connor Goodly	Southern University and A&M College

Rep. Hughes thanked the Task Force members, the audience, and the Wilson family for attending. Vice Chair Sen. Boudreaux thanked the Board of Regents, Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, and the Pennington Center for their work in preparing for the current meeting. Dr. Reed thanked those who attended the summit earlier in the day and stated that she looked forward to today's meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 28, 2025, MINUTES

Rep. Hughes asks for a motion to approve the minutes.

On motion of Senator Edward Price, seconded by Representative Joseph Stagni, the August 28, 2025, minutes were approved.

DISCUSSION OF TAKEAWAYS FROM THE HAZING PREVENTION SUMMIT

Rep. Hughes noted that some of the most powerful voices involved in the Task Force are the current students as they can bring meaningful change to their campuses. He introduced Mr. Nyic'Quavayion Willis, a student from Grambling State University, to the Task Force. Mr. Willis stated that the summit earlier that day was a phenomenal experience. He added that working with the leaders of the state to prevent hazing allowed him to gain insight on how to promote a culture of safety, security, and support for his campus. He emphasized his gratitude and thanks for the opportunity. Rep. Hughes thanked Mr. Willis for his comments and offered his support and the support of the other Task Force members for the other student members as they work on making changes on their campuses.

Rep. Hughes introduced Dr. Walter Kimbrough of UNCF. When asked by Rep. Stagni if older individuals are more likely to be involved in hazing, Dr. Kimbrough explained that over the past 10–15 years, many severe cases have involved young alumni or outsiders aged in their late

20s to 30s, who he commonly refers to as “extended adolescents.” These individuals, often influential in fraternities and band culture, operate under the radar and are difficult to monitor. He noted that about two-thirds of severe hazing cases involve this group, which often moves activities off-campus to avoid oversight, making prevention more challenging.

Sen. Price raised concerns about hazing starting before college, noting that most prevention efforts focus on higher education. Dr. Kimbrough cited StopHazing.org research, which shows that nearly half of students enter college with prior hazing experience, emphasizing the need to start prevention in middle and high school. He recommended integrating efforts with bullying prevention initiatives and social media education, involving schools, athletic associations, and public figures. Waiting until college, he noted, is often too late.

Rep. Hughes asked Dr. Kimbrough for legislative or policy recommendations; Dr. Kimbrough emphasized the need for comprehensive, mandatory annual training for all students, not just high-risk groups, on hazing, alcohol use, and related issues. He also recommended training for faculty and staff, hazing hotlines, stronger legislative guidance on training requirements, and adoption of best practices like retiring chapter names after expulsion to avoid preserving harmful legacies. He stressed that, given recent hazing deaths, proactive and statewide solutions are critical.

Dr. Amy Cable suggested involving faculty and staff in hazing prevention to boost reporting, given their awareness of warning signs. Dr. Kimbrough agreed, noting that increased reporting is due to greater awareness, not necessarily more hazing. He emphasized the importance of continued awareness efforts, such as PSAs during SEC games or partnerships with CBS. He also supported the proposed convening next summer to better train local law

enforcement, who often struggle to identify hazing, especially off-campus. Strengthening partnerships and legislative support are key to improving prevention and response.

Rep. Hughes thanked Dr. Kimbrough and emphasized the need for a new approach to hazing prevention in Louisiana. He introduced Morgan Johnson from East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney Hiller Moore's office to discuss legal accountability. Ms. Johnson reflected on prosecuting the Max Gruver case, which led to stronger hazing laws under the Max Gruver Act. These laws will be applied for the first time in the upcoming Caleb Wilson case. She stressed the long-term impact of hazing as well as the importance of education and prevention, and urged continued legislative action, stating, "We can't afford another hazing death in Louisiana." Rep. Hughes thanked Ms. Johnson for her work and for being there that day.

POSTSECONDARY SYSTEM UPDATES

Rep. Hughes introduced Dr. Erica Calais, VP of Student Affairs for the UL System, who emphasized that hazing prevention requires commitment from all campus stakeholders. Ms. Alicia Mitchell from ULM reported that since 2018 there have been 70 hazing incidents across the UL System's nine campuses. She added that schools use multiple reporting methods, including anonymous tools and the national hotline. Disciplinary actions include suspensions, expulsions, and educational sanctions. All campuses follow a conduct process, though standards and appeals vary. With 1,200+ student organizations and 16,000 participants, annual training, both online and in-person, covers hazing, alcohol, and campus policies. She emphasized that noncompliance leads to sanctions for both organizations and individuals.

Dr. Calais noted that future hazing prevention efforts encompass both immediate and long-term actions. Recommendations include developing a standardized, statewide training

curriculum with tailored modules for students, faculty, and staff, along with a centralized online platform. She emphasized that clear policy guidelines and legal interpretations, backed by ongoing legislative funding, are needed to support consistent implementation. Dr. Calais noted that establishing hazing prevention task forces at both institutional and system levels will help maintain focus and accountability. A unified reporting system, enhanced peer education, professional speakers, and potential training requirements before course registration are also proposed. She specified that regular assessment of training effectiveness, consistent enforcement, standardized appeals, and sharing of best practices across institutions will support sustained progress.

Rep. Hughes asked if a clear rubric exists for automatic suspension or expulsion, and Dr. Calais responded that decisions are made case-by-case. Noting inconsistencies across campuses, Rep. Hughes called for uniform standards and requested written clarification on policies, including whether expelled chapters can return under a new name. Ms. Mitchell explained that expulsion means removal for a set time or permanently, while deactivation means the group is inactive but may return. Suspensions are temporary, allowing return, whereas expulsions are usually permanent and recorded on transcripts.

Rep. Hughes thanked Ms. Mitchell and Dr. Calais for their presentation.

REVIEW OF EVIDENTIARY STANDARDS OF STUDENT DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

Rep. Hughes introduced Julie Ralph, Assistant Attorney General with the Office of Attorney General Liz Murrill. Ms. Ralph stated that the evidentiary standard for campus hearings involving suspensions of greater than ten days or expulsions changed in Act 416 of 2024. She added that decisions had previously been based on a preponderance of the evidence, with a

threshold of just over 50% certainty. She emphasized that, now, the standard is clear and convincing evidence, which requires a higher level of proof. In hazing cases, this means that student conduct hearing panels must be firmly convinced the misconduct occurred and merely conflicting testimony or minimal evidence is no longer sufficient. Strong, consistent, and corroborated proof (e.g., witness statements, texts, photos, medical or police reports) is now required. This shift raises the burden of proof in campus disciplinary hearings, though it remains lower than the criminal standard of beyond a reasonable doubt.

Rep. Stagni, Mr. Trey Jones, and Dr. Winton Anderson voiced strong concerns that the clear and convincing evidence standard under Act 416 makes it harder for institutions to discipline hazing offenders. They argued the standard is too high for campus settings, especially without subpoena power, since institutions must rely on limited evidence and uncooperative witnesses. Dr. Anderson also noted the financial risk institutions face if sanctions are overturned in court, which discourages decisive action. Rep. Hughes agreed, citing group silence within organizations and calling the law's impact a chilling effect that was not fully anticipated. The group recommended revisiting the law, restoring institutional authority, and examining how other states handle similar standards. All emphasized the need for swift, empowered action to ensure real accountability in hazing cases.

Rep. Hughes introduced Major Nicole Kilgore with the Louisiana State Police. Major Kilgore commended the institutions for their strong hazing prevention efforts, acknowledging that initial doubts were answered through recent discussions. She emphasized the need for more collaboration between campuses and local law enforcement, especially to support smaller institutions and address off-campus hazing. She raised questions about limiting access to campus for older individuals involved in hazing and preventing banned organizations from re-emerging

off-campus. Major Kilgore stressed the importance of early education, suggesting hazing prevention be introduced in middle and high schools, possibly through legislation or campus outreach programs, to better prepare students before college.

Rep. Hughes thanked the panel for their presentations. He suggested to invite Mr. Tavares Walker, Executive Director of BESE, to attend the next meeting. He added that K-12 participation was mentioned in previous meetings and continues to come up, so establishing a partnership with K-12 and BESE is prudent for the Task Force's continued efforts.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Rep. Hughes introduced Dr. Allison Smith, Assistant Commissioner for Student Health and Wellness for the Board of Regents, to provide a summary of the recommendations offered at the first meeting by the system and Task Force members. Dr. Smith stated that key recommendations include implementing standardized hazing prevention training across all Louisiana institutions, to ensure all students receive annual, Louisiana-specific education regardless of when they join an organization. She added that financial support is needed to help institutions roll out large-scale training programs, especially those involving peer educators and student-led campaigns, which are seen as more effective with younger audiences. Dr. Smith recounted that institutions recommend streamlining reporting processes by allowing the use of systems like Maxient, which all campuses now have, to avoid efforts duplicative of Board of Regents forms. Dr. Smith emphasized the need for more interactive and intimate training formats, such as simulations, scenario-based learning, and role-playing, which encourage deeper student understanding and engagement.

Rep. Hughes thanked Dr. Smith for her presentation. Dr. Cable stated that funding should be clearly designated for hazing prevention, with a specific budget line and reporting requirements to ensure dollars are used as intended to avoid misallocation or creative accounting by institutions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

NEXT STEPS & ADJOURNMENT

Rep. Hughes emphasized that while some believe hazing may never be eradicated. We must adopt the mindset that serious outcomes like bodily injury and death can be eliminated. He stressed the need for ongoing training, conversations, simulations, and PSAs, and not just one-time efforts, to effectively prevent hazing. He closed by reminding members of the next Task Force meeting on November 3rd and encouraged them to prepare for in-depth work on the final report.

On motion of Mr. Willis, seconded by Dr. Anderson, the meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

ADDITIONAL GUESTS

Lamar Dixon - University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Carl Tapo - University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Yolanda Curtis-Wilson

Urania Wilson

Corey Wilson

Samuel Speed - Louisiana Tech

Tundra Turner - Grambling State University

Rudolph Elles - Grambling State University

Yonna Pasch - Northwestern State University

Madysen Morgan - Northwestern State University

Reatha Cox - Northwestern State University

Michele Caruso - Nicholls State University

Janice Lyn - Nicholls State University

Meagan Rousse - Nicholls State University

Linda Law Clark - University of Louisiana System

Terri Dawson - Baton Rouge Community College

Jacoby Tubbs - Southern University Shreveport

Kimberly Davis - Piazza Center/ Penn State

Jill Maurer - Gordie Center/ University of Virginia

Morgan Johnson - East Baton Rouge District Attorney's Office

Amber Blair - LCTCS

Jeremiah Sams - Southern University System

Misti Cordell - Board of Regents

Sami Owens - University of Louisiana at Monroe

Jacinta Massey - Northshore Community College (LCTCS)

Kreslyn Kelley-Ellis - LSU Wellness & Student Support

Kedrick Nicholas - McNeese State University