

# 2021 Legislative Session Ends with Big Wins for Restaurant Industry

The 2021 Legislative Session ended June 10 with the passage of several bills of significance to our industry. We sincerely thank each member of the House and Senate, especially those we consider our “Hospitality Heroes,” who authored and aided in the passage of legislation to support restaurants, bars and hotels. Led by LRA President and CEO Stan Harris, your LRA Advocacy Team worked diligently right up until the 6 p.m. deadline on the last day, to ensure that these items remained in a posture for passage this session. As you are well aware, advocacy is the lifeblood of the LRA. The last 17 months have been nothing short of historical.

## Tourism Recovery



**The Honorable Kirk Talbot**  
*Senate District 10*

The effects of the pandemic have challenged many of the ways in which the state and its lawmakers previously conducted its business. Senate Concurrent Resolution 4 by Sen. Talbot removes the restriction that the Louisiana Office of Tourism (LOT) cannot spend more than 10% of its budget on “in-state” advertising and promotion (for one year). As many restaurants are seeking to gain their footing coming out of the pandemic, this allows the LOT to support in-state initiatives like Restaurant Week New Orleans, Eat Lafayette and the Louisiana Seafood Cook-Off. Thanks a ton, Rep. Talbot!



**The Honorable Clay Schexnayder**  
*Speaker of the House, District 81*

Of the \$1.2 Billion American Rescue Plan funds allocated to Louisiana, \$77 million dollars was dedicated to tourism promotion, marketing and sales funding. This will be used to support local tourism economies through Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB) across the state, helping restaurants, hotels, venues and attractions gain future business, group and leisure travelers. Forever grateful Rep. Schexnayder!



**The Honorable Randal Gaines**  
*House District 57*

No doubt Louisiana tourism was hit hard during the pandemic as travel came to a skretching halt. Through a partnership with the Louisiana Travel Association, HB 415 by Rep. Gaines provides the opportunity for CVB and destination marketing organization to propose tourism recovery and improvement districts, requiring a 2/3rds vote of those businesses who agree to participate with a 5-year sunset. Hooray for Rep. Gaines!



**The Honorable J. Cameron Henry**  
*Senate District 9*

Think big on this one—Super Bowls, College Football Playoffs, the Independence Bowl, Essence Festival! SB 162 by Senator Cameron Henry updates the state’s Major Events Funds and adds clarity to the funding approval process for events like these that are held across the state. Thanks a million Sen. Henry!

## Alcohol



**The Honorable Kirk Talbot**  
*Senate District 10*

Can you imagine owning or operating a hotel and learning that in Louisiana, there is no permit specific to serving alcohol through room service, the restaurant, bar or banquets? SB 76 defined the licensing for hotels in Title 26 regulations. Hats off to Sen. Talbot for his hard work!



**The Honorable John Illg**  
*House District 78*

Legislation passed in 2019 allowed for restaurants to sell wine and beer in a manufactured sealed container with food delivery. SB 219 by Rep. Illg adds ready-to-drink cocktails to the existing restaurant alcohol with food delivery statute. That means a canned cocktail like a Jack and Ginger or a Crown and Cola, not a mixed drink on site. This takes effect August 1, 2021. Cheers to you Rep. Illg!



**The Honorable Randal Gaines**  
*House District 57*

Up until the pandemic, restaurant and bar owners were prohibited from paying for their wholesale wine, beer and spirits with a credit card. HB 192 by Rep. Gaines adds credit cards as a payment option. A move beyond cash and check has come to the alcohol wholesale industry in Louisiana. Thanks Rep. Gaines!



**The Honorable Larry Selders**  
*House District 67*

HB 296 provides clarity for Class C ATC licenses to allow for limited on premise sales. That means a wine store can serve wine by the glass as long as it doesn’t exceed 20% of its total annual revenue of alcoholic beverage sales. This is a great benefit to boost overall sales. Who wouldn’t want to try a glass before committing to the bottle? Raise a glass for Rep. Selders!

## Sales Tax



**The Honorable Clay Schexnayder**  
*Speaker of the House, District 81*

Did you know that businesses operating in multiple parishes have to remit sales & use tax to each individual municipality? House Speaker Clay Schexnayder authored HB 199 which will bring the opportunity to streamline this process to a vote of the people. Louisiana and Oregon are the only states that continue to collect sales & use tax in this way. Kudos for this enormous undertaking!

## Gaming



**The Honorable John Stefanski**  
*House District 42*

In 55 parishes that approved sports wagering in their ballot referendums, HB 697 defines who can participate in sports wagering including all qualified Class A and Class A–Restaurants using kiosks through the Louisiana Lottery Corporation. Thanks to Rep. Stefanski, House Speaker Schexnayder and Senate President Cortez for including restaurants and bars in this option. We appreciate you, gentlemen!



**The Honorable Patrick Page Cortez**  
*Senate District 23*



Special thanks goes out to  
*Senate President Cortez,  
House Appropriations Chair  
Zee Zeringue,  
House Appropriations Vice Chair  
— Sen. Elect Gary Carter &  
Sen. Finance Chair Bodi White  
for their support of tourism,  
hospitality and Louisiana’s  
restaurants, bars and caterers!*