



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SEN. DUPLESSIS GAINS APPROVAL OF KEY REFORMS
AT 2009 REGULAR SESSION

FOCUSES ON EDUCATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
CONSUMER PROTECTION & HEALTHY, SAFE COMMUNITIES

At the recently completed 2009 Regular Session, State Senator Ann Duplessis (D-New Orleans) gained legislative approval for a number of reform proposals. Sen. Duplessis led efforts to establish programs and policies important to economic development, healthy and safe families, consumer protection and more. Senate Bill 277 by Sen. Duplessis, which addresses the state income tax credit provided to developers of qualified digital interactive media projects, is one of those reform measures. The measure makes the tax credit permanent and expands the types of project that are eligible for the tax incentive.

"This kind of business development incentive is particularly important to the state's push to build on the intellectual and creative capital we have here in Louisiana," Sen. Duplessis said. "We have a tremendous opportunity to keep our best and our brightest in Louisiana and to attract additional talent to our state if we provide the right environment for such economic development."

Sen. Duplessis also authored Senate Bill 299, the Healthy Food Retail Act. In an effort to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy food in underserved communities, this measure requires the Department of Agriculture in cooperation with public and private partners, to establish a financing program to provide grants and loans to healthy food retailers. The bill is the result of a study concluded earlier this year that showed poor nutrition is linked to many health issues prevalent in low-income populations.

In the coming months, a special joint legislative committee will study the economic impact that East New Orleans has on the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 141 by Sen. Duplessis establishes the special committee. The committee will report its findings to the legislature by March 1st of next year.

Joining forces with her colleagues in the Senate and in the House, Sen. Duplessis co-authored several other important reform measures including Senate Bill 285 which creates the Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council. The goal is to establish a system that allows for students to transfer credits between and among public schools, technical colleges, community colleges and four-year colleges and universities. The bill also guarantees any community college graduate can transfer to a four-year university. The goal is to have the system in place by the 2010-2011 school year.

Sen. Duplessis also co-authored House Bill 784 which expands the authority of state social service officials to conduct criminal background checks on employees to make sure that those who have contact with children do not pose a threat to those children and House Bill 810, the SAFE Mortgage Licensing Act. This act establishes minimum standards for the licensing and registration of mortgage loan originators in Louisiana in an effort to improve consumer protection and reduce fraud.

Other measures authored by Sen. Duplessis that gained approval of the House and the Senate include:

- **Senate Bill 146 which requires the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and local school boards to establish a charter school application review process that complies with standards outlined by the National Association of Charter School Authorizer and to provide for a third-party, independent review of applications. The measure also allows religious organizations to provide support services such as mentoring, tutoring, volunteering and fund-raising to charter schools.**
- **Senate Bill 105 which creates the crime of mortgage fraud in connection with residential mortgage lending activity.**
- **Senate Bill 151 which requires the Secretary of State to set up a system for the registration, reporting and professional development for providers of notary examination preparation courses.**
- **Senate Bill 102 which provides for the East New Orleans Neighborhood Advisory Commission.**
- **Senate Bill 103 which creates and provides for the Oak Island Neighborhood Improvement District.**
- **Senate Bill 104 which creates the Lakewood East Security and Neighborhood Improvement District.**
- **Senate Bill 349 which extend the work of the Reverend Avery C. Alexander Memorial Commission through December 31, 2012.**

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