



NEWSLETTER NO. 10

ELLEVATE LOUISIANA



ELLEVATE LOUISIANA WAS FOUNDED IN 2020 TO EMPOWER WOMEN LEADERS THROUGHOUT LOUISIANA BY CONNECTING AND EDUCATING THEM ON THE CHALLENGES IMPACTING OUR STATE WITH DATA-DRIVEN, NON-PARTISAN SOLUTIONS TO MAKE A BETTER FUTURE FOR LOUISIANA.

Thank you, Speakers!
Thank You, "ELLEVATORS"

We extend our deepest gratitude to the speakers that shared their expertise with us and to the members of Ellevate Louisiana for making our Inaugural Policy Summit on September 26, 2024, at The City Club of Baton Rouge a remarkable success. This member-exclusive event was crafted to bring everyone up to speed on key policy areas as we head into the next legislative session, to conduct our Annual Meeting, and to foster networking within our community. With an impressive 87% attendance rate, the summit was a testament to the commitment and engagement of our members. For those who couldn't join us, here's a recap of the influential discussions and the people who brought each panel to life.

TAXATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The summit began with Louisiana Department of Revenue Secretary Richard Nelson providing a sobering look at the state's fiscal outlook. He is proposing comprehensive tax reform to address the impending deficits and improve the business tax climate. Lowering personal and corporate income taxes, eliminating the franchise tax, broadening the sales tax base, and shifting to a flat tax structure are being proposed. His plan aims to reduce the reliance on temporary taxes and ensure fiscal stability, which he intends to formalize during a special session to start on November 6th.



Louisiana Economic Development (LED) Secretary Susan Bourgeois then emphasized the state's priorities in enhancing economic growth and competitiveness. She introduced LED's "Five Pillars" for success: position Louisiana to win, ensure every Louisianan has the opportunity for growing wages, create thriving regions

that continually capitalize on opportunities, optimize Louisiana's legacy industries to lead into the future, and drive Louisiana's business ecosystem toward growth, innovation and global impact. Her insights set the stage for bold strategies to improve Louisiana's ranking among business-friendly states.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Health & Wellness panel featured Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Secretary Michael Harrington, DCFS Undersecretary Rebecca Harris, and State Child Ombudsman Kathleen Richey. They opened by distinguishing the roles of the Surgeon General and LDH Secretary in shaping and executing health policies. Secretary Harrington outlined LDH's main priorities: maternal and child health, behavioral health, chronic disease prevention, and community safety.



The conversation moved to Whole Health Louisiana, a trauma-informed health initiative addressing childhood adversity, with collaborative support from various state agencies. Undersecretary Harris discussed the critical need for foster parents throughout the state and the challenges of operating on a limited budget. She also discussed working with LDH to identify and address gaps in services. Finally, Ombudsman Richey shared her early experiences in this newly established role aimed at ensuring better care and accountability for children in state services, noting that her office is housed in the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's Office which allows her to work with all entities that serve children across the state. She is hopeful about changes that her office can facilitate once better established.



WORKFORCE & HIGHER EDUCATION

The Workforce & Higher Education panel brought together Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) Assistant Secretary Osmar Padilla as well as Louisiana Board of Regent's Higher Education Commissioner Dr. Kim Hunter Reed and Deputy Commissioner Dr. Tristan Denley. The discussion focused on aligning workforce development with industry needs needs. Padilla emphasized the importance of equipping individuals with skills for better job opportunities, reducing reliance on public assistance, and addressing Louisiana's low labor force participation rate.



Drs. Reed and Denley provided insights into bridging the gap between education and workforce demands, highlighting tools like Lightcast and the CLIFF Suite to support job training and financial stability for those on public assistance. Their goal is to raise Louisiana's degree/credential attainment rate to 60% by 2030, which will play a crucial role in strengthening the state's economy and reducing poverty.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & K-12



Passionate advocates for early childhood education and K-12 shared their insights through a panel that included Louisiana Policy Institute for Children Executive Director Dr. Libbie Sonnier, Senior Education Advisor to the Governor Dr. Sabrah Kingham, and Louisiana Public School Boards Association Executive Director

Dr. Janet Pope. Dr. Sonnier shared compelling statistics on the importance of early brain development, noting 80% of a child's brain is developed by age three. She stressed the long-term economic benefits of investing in early childhood education, which can reduce crime rates and increase high school graduation rates.

Dr. Kingham celebrated recent improvements in state rankings and test scores, while acknowledging that more work is needed, particularly in math proficiency. She expressed optimism in the state's commitment to educational investment and school choice.

Dr. Pope emphasized that public education succeeds with consistent investment and consistency of standards. She emphasized the importance of funding ECE, K-12, and higher education to achieve statewide educational success.

ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

The summit closed with a critical discussion on Environment & Infrastructure. Entergy's VP of Public Affairs Jody Montelaro highlighted electrical grid enhancements for resilience against extreme weather, emphasizing increased dependency on a reliable electric grid for Louisiana's growth. He noted Entergy's success in reducing power outage times through significant infrastructure investments.

Department of Energy & Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Tyler Gray Provided a historical overview of Louisiana's oil industry and coastal protection efforts post-Katrina and Rita, leading to the creation of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA). He discussed DENR's impending restructuring, noting that it could lead to better funding and grant access. He also indicated that CPRA would remain independent.



Greg Grandy from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) discussed Louisiana's coastal land loss and CPRA's vision for restoration and protection through its Comprehensive Master Plan. He noted funding challenges with diminishing Deepwater Horizon funds and the importance of alternative stable revenue sources, including the upcoming constitutional amendment to allocate federal OCS revenue to coastal restoration.

WRAP UP

The summit underscored Ellevate Louisiana's commitment to informing and empowering its members on the key issues affecting our state. We look forward to the impact that our collective voices will have on shaping a better future for Louisiana. Thank you to our speakers, and to all of you Ellevators, for your dedication and engagement!

By: Julie Stokes, *Ellevate Louisiana CEO/President &*
Yvonne Krumins, *Ellevate Louisiana Policy Coordinator*

Women Are Dominating Men at the Polls

Although the 19th amendment was ratified barely a century ago, women nationally and state-wide in Louisiana have spent the last several decades showing up to the polls at higher rates than men. Nationally, women have voted at higher rates than men in every single presidential election since 1980 and in higher numbers in general since 1964 (Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP)). Not even 50 years after ratification, women began dominating the polls that used to be



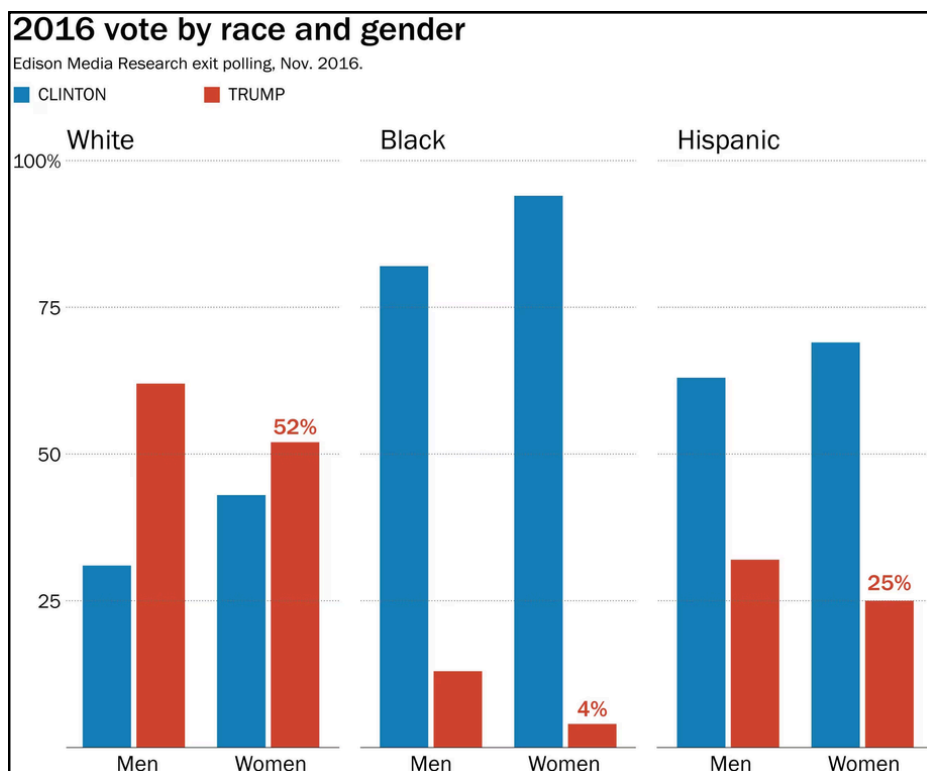
closed to them. In 2020, 68.4% of women cast their vote for the presidential election while only 65% of men did and in 2022, 70% of women were registered to vote compared to 68.2% of men (CAWP). In recent years, female voter registrations average about 10 million more than men with the gap closing slightly to 7.4 million in 2022 (CAWP). These trends apply to non-presidential elections too with 53% of women voting in 2022 compared to 51.3% of men (CAWP).

Although in more modest numbers, Louisiana women are also turning up to vote at greater rates than the men of our state. During the 2020 presidential election, 52.2% of the Louisiana voters were women and 47.8% were men (Stacker). In 2022, 55% of the state's registered voters were female while men made up the remaining 45% (Public Affairs Research Council). And according to data from the Louisiana Secretary of State's office, women outpaced men in voter registration by 64% in July of this year (Auzenne). University of Louisiana political science professor Pearson Cross reasons that this uptick of female voter registration is due to Kamala Harris' replacement of Joe Biden on the ballot (Auzenne). The professor theorizes that the entrance of a female candidate has motivated the state's female voters, especially African American women who are "energized by the thought of having a Black woman in the White House" (Auzenne). Finally, of the almost 177,000 Louisianans who showed up to vote early for this 2024 election, over 100,000 of them were women, giving women a 31% increase in voter turnout for early voting over men (LaRose).

Interestingly, the size of the gender gap in voter turnout depends on a variety of other demographics like ethnicity, age, educational attainment and even marital status. Beginning with ethnicity, no consistent voting gender gap has been found among Asian American or Pacific Island voters, but Black and Hispanic women reliably out-vote the men of their groups (CAWP). Observing age, while women 18-44 show up in greater numbers to the polls compared to the men of their age group, the lead flips to men in those over 65 years old (CAWP). Next, researchers found that between men and women with higher levels of educational attainment, there exists almost no gap, but as educational attainment decreases, the gap increases in size (CAWP). And finally, never married and divorced people experience a gender gap favoring women voters while there's almost no gap between married men and married women (CAWP).

So how does Louisiana compare with the rest of the country in female voter turnout? Unfortunately, like many other ranked lists, we come close to last, with female voter turnout in Louisiana ranked 44th in the country (United Health Foundation). Our rate of 55.6% for national elections falls short of the 60.7% national average and very short of the 73.3% female voter turnout in Oregon, the state leading the nation (United Health Foundation). However, black women in Louisiana are helping to get our state's turnout numbers up as they represent the highest voter turnout rates of any group in the state (Louisiana's Women's Policy and Research Commission). These trends expand nationally too with black women being one of the most active voting blocs in the U.S. electorate (Solomon and Maxwell).

For example, in 2012, while 63.7% of women voted in the presidential election, 74% of black women voted (Solomon and Maxwell). In 2016, even with a voter turnout drop-off, 63.3% of women voted in the presidential election compared to 66% of black women (Solomon and Maxwell). Representing 17% of Louisiana's population, the mobilization of black women has the potential to bring LA's rate of female voter turnout closer to the national average (Louisiana's Women's Policy and Research Commission).



[Trump celebrates winning 52 percent of women in 2016 – which is only how he did among whites – The Washington Post](#)

Unbelievably, women's voices today are being heard louder than men's in a democracy that used to exist without our votes at all. It is largely up to the women of Louisiana and the United States to determine the fate of this presidential election. So, no matter who you're voting for, VOTE! Because it's paramount that we as women vote to maintain our representation in this democracy.

By: Gigi Hendrickson, *Ellevote Louisiana Staff*

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Power in the Pushback



In a national election year, when tensions run high and stakes are greater than ever, the ability to work well with adversaries is crucial for any leader. Whether you're in politics, advocacy, or community leadership, you will inevitably face opposition. In this increasingly polarized climate, it may seem easier to double down on your positions and shut out those who challenge you. But in truth, it's through productive engagement with adversaries that lasting, impactful change can be made. This is where the concept of *Power in the Pushback* becomes essential—transforming opposition into progress by working with, not against, those who hold different views.

[Opinion | Daniel Kahneman's Gift for Adversarial Collaboration Is What We Need Now - The New York Times](#)

THE OPPORTUNITY OF ADVERSARIES

Opposition, in any form, forces us to sharpen our message, rethink strategies, and solidify our "why." This election is not just about winning or losing, but about creating spaces where divergent perspectives can lead to innovative solutions. In politics and beyond, collaboration with adversaries, although uncomfortable, can yield the most enduring results.

HOW TO WORK WELL WITH ADVERSARIES

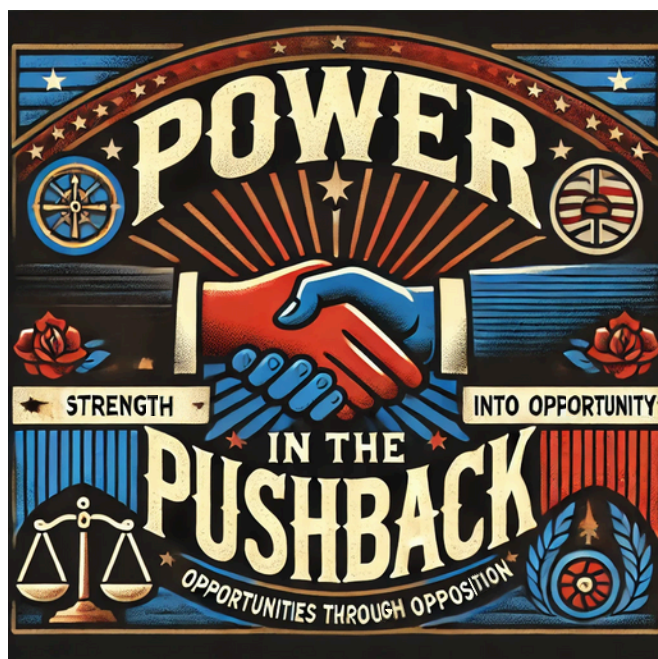
1. **Embrace the Discomfort:** The most effective leaders know that discomfort is part of the process. Instead of viewing adversaries as roadblocks, see them as opportunities to refine your approach. What can you learn from their perspective? This doesn't mean compromising your values, but rather understanding the landscape more fully so that your leadership becomes more nuanced and effective.
2. **Stay Anchored in Your "Why":** It's easy to get lost in the push and pull of election-year debates. In the heat of conflict, staying connected to your core mission is essential. Ask yourself: Does this decision bring me closer to the impact I want to make? This is especially important when working with those who challenge you. Keeping your eyes on your long-term goals will help you engage in productive dialogue without losing sight of what truly matters to you.
3. **Find Shared Values:** Even the fiercest adversaries often share more in common than we initially think. While you may never agree on the details of a policy, you can find common ground in shared values—whether it's a commitment to community, the desire for safety, or the goal of leaving behind a better world for the next generation. Frame your conversations around shared values. It won't erase the differences, but it can shift the dynamic from a zero-sum game to one of possibility.

4. **Lead with Empathy, Remain Resolute:** Empathy is critical when dealing with adversaries. Acknowledging their concerns—even when you fundamentally disagree—creates an atmosphere of respect. This doesn't mean compromising on your mission. A successful leader finds ways to balance empathy with firm resolve, understanding when to be flexible on the methods while staying unwavering on the core goals.

WHY NOW MORE THAN EVER?

This is no time to shrink from the challenge. We need leaders who can stand firm in their convictions while still engaging constructively with their adversaries. The temptation to demonize the opposition is strong, but the path forward requires something much more difficult: The ability to find solutions together.

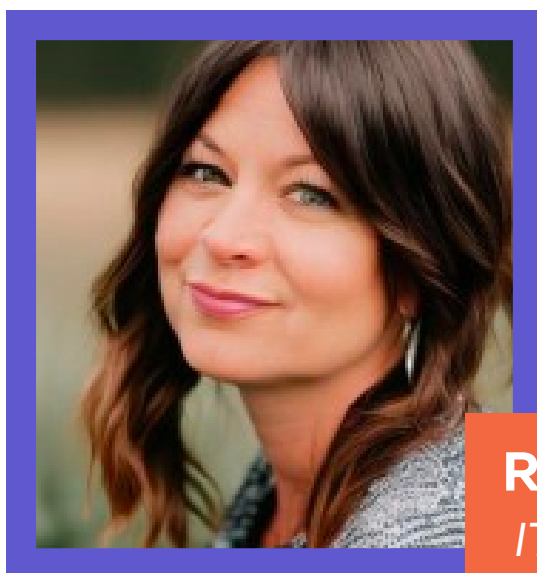
Power in the Pushback isn't about backing down—it's about meeting opposition with strength and strategy. It's about recognizing that true leadership happens not when you avoid conflict, but when you embrace it and turn it into an opportunity for growth.



ChatGPT, 2024

THE ELECTION AND BEYOND

As this election unfolds, remember that today's opponents might be tomorrow's allies. The most successful leaders are those who can navigate the complexities of these relationships, transforming friction into fuel for progress. Whether you're voting, campaigning, or leading a movement, remember that *Power in the Pushback* is about embracing adversity and leveraging it to create lasting change.



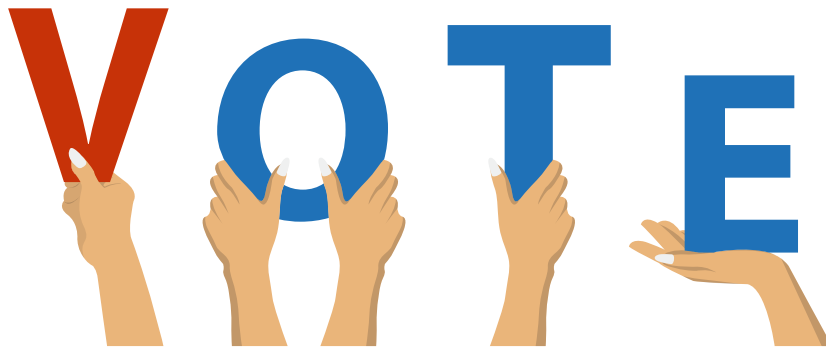
RAYNE MARTIN
IT'S THE IMPACT



ELECTION DAY IS HERE!



**DON'T FORGET TO CHECK YOUR
SAMPLE BALLOT BEFORE
HEADING TO THE POLLS!**



Application

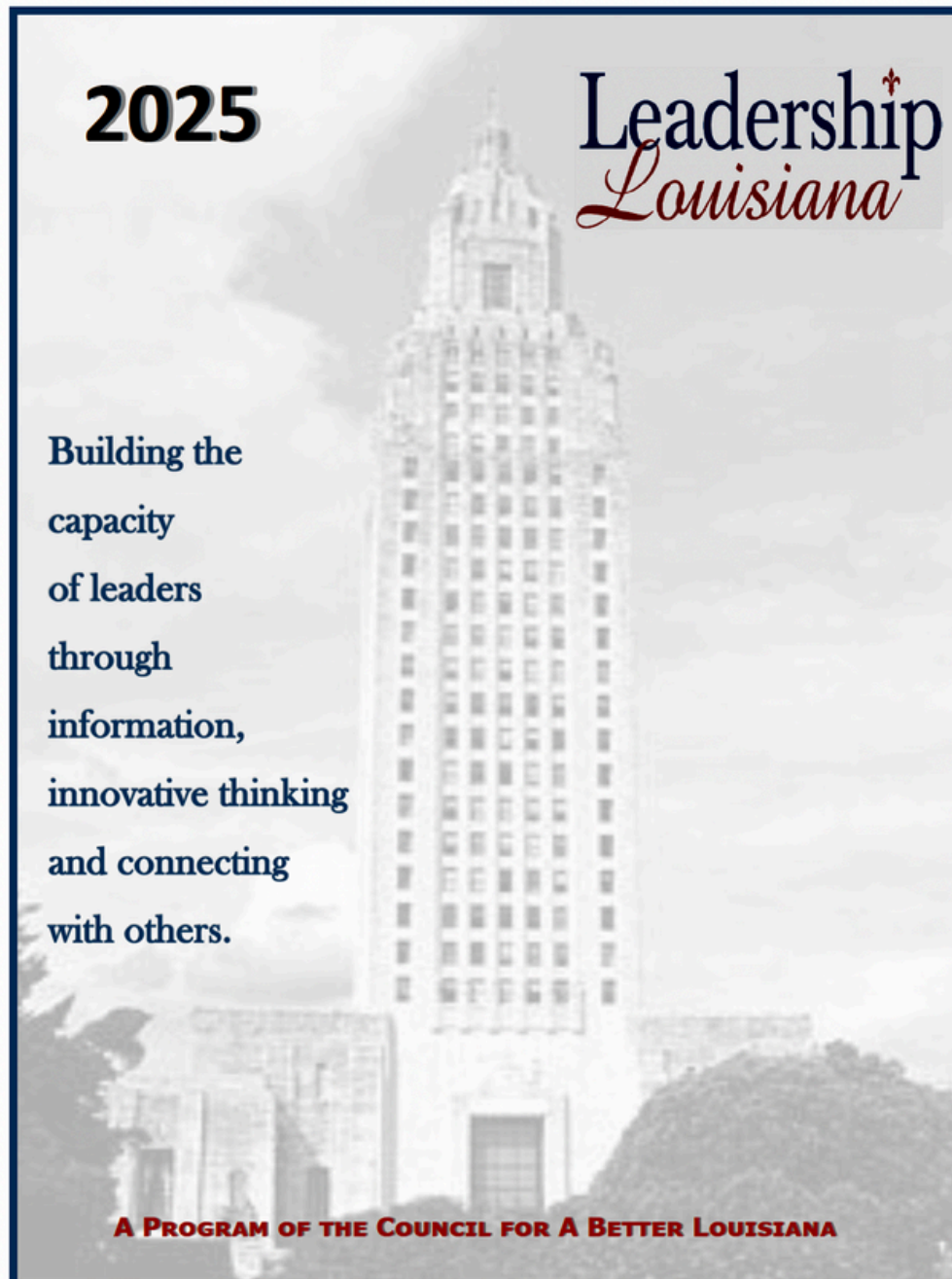
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