

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 576

BY REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 49:141 and to enact Chapter 5-S of Title 25 of the Louisiana
3 Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 25:380.161 through 380.166,
4 relative to the Old Governor's Mansion; to transfer the Old Governor's Mansion to
5 the Department of State; to provide for the powers, duties, functions, and
6 responsibilities of the secretary of state and the department; to provide relative to
7 operations and funding; to provide for effectiveness; and to provide for related
8 matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. Chapter 5-S of Title 25 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,
11 comprised of R.S. 25:380.161 through 380.166, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 CHAPTER 5-S. OLD GOVERNOR'S MANSION

13 §380.161. Definitions

14 For the purposes of this Chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings
15 indicated unless the context clearly provides otherwise:

16 (1) "Department" means the Department of State.

17 (2) "Secretary" means the secretary of state.

18 §380.162. Establishment and location; purpose and use

19 A. The Old Governor's Mansion is established as a facility in the City of
20 Baton Rouge under the overall jurisdiction of the department, as more specifically
21 provided in this Chapter.

22 B. The secretary shall have custody, control, and supervision of maintenance
23 of the Old Governor's Mansion and its contents. Title to the Old Governor's Mansion
24 shall remain in the state of Louisiana, along with all buildings and other

1 improvements constructed thereon. All of the management, functions, programs, and
2 operations of every kind of the Old Governor's Mansion shall be exercised and
3 performed by the secretary.

4 C. For purposes of administration and supervision of the Old Governor's
5 Mansion, the secretary shall have full authority over its grounds and all other
6 buildings and improvements constructed thereon, and shall control any use made
7 thereof and the space therein.

8 D. The Old Governor's Mansion shall be a historical, cultural, and
9 educational institution whose primary purpose shall be to collect, preserve, and
10 present, as an educational resource, documents, artifacts, objects of art, and the like,
11 that reflect the politics, history, art, and culture of Louisiana.

12 §380.163. Operations

13 Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary and in particular the
14 provisions of R.S. 41:1212, the secretary may enter into contracts and agreements
15 with any public agency or nonprofit corporation which has been established for the
16 primary purpose of supporting the programs and activities of the Old Governor's
17 Mansion for the establishment of offices, stores, or exhibits on the property of and
18 in the Old Governor's Mansion. The secretary may also enter into contracts and
19 agreements for joint construction, equipment, maintenance, and financing thereof,
20 and may enter into contracts and agreements for the joint financing, supervision, and
21 conduct of cooperative enterprises and undertakings. Any public agency may enter
22 into contracts and agreements with the secretary for the purposes mentioned in this
23 Section.

24 §380.164. Operating funds

25 A. The legislature shall provide sufficient funds for the proper operation of
26 the Old Governor's Mansion.

27 B.(1) If sufficient funds necessary for the operation of the Old Governor's
28 Mansion are not appropriated by the legislature, and funds from other local, public,
29 or private sources are not available for this purpose, the department may temporarily
30 close the Old Governor's Mansion to the public until such time as sufficient funds

1 necessary for the operation of the Old Governor's Mansion are appropriated by the
2 legislature. The department shall maintain the Old Governor's Mansion during any
3 period of temporary closure.

4 (2) The department may accept and use, in accordance with law, gifts,
5 grants, bequests, donations, endowments, or funds from any public or private source
6 to support operations of the Old Governor's Mansion.

7 §380.165. Donations and loans; disposition of abandoned loans

8 A. The secretary may solicit and accept funds, governmental grants,
9 donations, and contributions of lands, buildings, monies, relics, works of art, or other
10 property on behalf of and as additions to the Old Governor's Mansion either in the
11 form of loans or in the form of donations inter vivos or mortis causa, and the
12 secretary may acquire them by purchase, lease, or otherwise, subject to the terms,
13 conditions, or limitations contained in the instrument by which such property is
14 acquired. However, the secretary shall be empowered and authorized to enter into
15 any and all contracts with any person, lender, or donor that he may deem fit, proper,
16 and necessary to accept and receive such lands, buildings, monies, relics, works of
17 art, or other property on behalf of and as additions to the Old Governor's Mansion.
18 The Old Governor's Mansion is specifically empowered to serve as the beneficiary
19 of any public trust heretofore or hereafter created for such purpose pursuant to the
20 provisions of R.S. 9:2341 through 2347.

21 B. The secretary is granted the authority of deaccession with respect to any
22 collections of the Old Governor's Mansion and for such purpose is specifically
23 exempted from the laws of the state relative to the sale or disposal of surplus
24 property. The secretary shall establish policies and procedures necessary to carry out
25 this authority in an orderly manner.

26 C.(1) Any property which has been deposited with the Old Governor's
27 Mansion, by loan or otherwise, and which has been held by the Old Governor's
28 Mansion for more than ten years, and to which no person has made a claim shall be
29 deemed to be abandoned and, notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 1 of Title
30 XII of Book III of the Civil Code, shall become the property of the Old Governor's

1 Mansion, provided that the secretary of state has published a notice and listing of the
 2 property in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the parish at least once
 3 per week for two consecutive weeks. The notice shall contain:

4 (a) The name and last known address, if any, of the last known owner or
 5 depositor of the property.

6 (b) A description of the property.

7 (c) A statement that if proof of claim is not presented by the owner to the
 8 secretary and if the owner's right to receive such property is not established to the
 9 satisfaction of the secretary within sixty-five days from the date of the second
 10 published notice, the property will be deemed abandoned and shall become the
 11 property of the Old Governor's Mansion.

12 (2) If no valid claim is made to the property within sixty-five days from the
 13 date of the second published notice, title to the property shall vest in the Old
 14 Governor's Mansion free from all claims of the owner and all persons claiming
 15 through or under him.

16 §380.166. Use of collections

17 The collections of the Old Governor's Mansion may be lent in part subject to
 18 approval by the secretary. The secretary shall ensure proper safeguards for their
 19 maintenance and return and shall ensure that proper records are kept.

20 Section 2. R.S. 49:141 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

21 §141. Division of State Buildings; superintendent; duties

22 ~~A.~~ There is created the Division of State Buildings in the office of the
 23 governor which shall be administered by a superintendent of state buildings
 24 appointed by the governor. The superintendent of state buildings shall have charge
 25 of the management, operation, and maintenance of general public buildings of the
 26 state, including ~~both the old and new governor's mansions~~ the new governor's
 27 mansion.

28 ~~B.~~ ~~The Division of State Buildings shall have custody and supervision of~~
 29 ~~maintenance of the Old Governor's Mansion. Title to said property shall remain in~~
 30 ~~the state of Louisiana, along with all buildings and other improvements constructed~~

1 ~~thereon. The buildings and grounds shall be maintained by the superintendent of~~
2 ~~state buildings out of regular appropriations made for such purposes.~~

3 ~~C. For purposes of administration and supervision of the Old Governor's~~
4 ~~Mansion, the commissioner of administration shall have full authority over its~~
5 ~~grounds and all other buildings and improvements constructed thereon, and shall~~
6 ~~control any use made thereof and the space therein. He shall have further authority~~
7 ~~to transfer custody, supervision, and general administrative control for purposes of~~
8 ~~historic preservation, heritage education, maintenance, protection, and promotion of~~
9 ~~the building, historical collections, and artifacts and the historical integrity of the site~~
10 ~~to any public agency or nonprofit corporation with sufficient resources necessary to~~
11 ~~operate the said facility consistent therewith as its custodian in order to administer~~
12 ~~and to insure the future of the mansion and the value of its collections; and to honor~~
13 ~~the relationships and trusts established in the early years with the governors and their~~
14 ~~families who donated personal items for such purposes, as the said commissioner of~~
15 ~~administration may deem appropriate, according to the constitution and laws of the~~
16 ~~state of Louisiana, including R.S. 39:11 et seq.~~

17 Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
18 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
19 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
20 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
21 effective on the day following such approval.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____