



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER JBE 2022-4

***ELECTIONS – SUSPENDING AND RESCHEDULING
DEADLINE TO ORDER SPECIAL ELECTIONS***

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Louisiana Homeland Security and Emergency Assistance and Disaster Act, La. R.S. 29:721, *et seq.*, on March 11, 2020 in Proclamation Number 25 JBE 2020, the Governor declared that a statewide public health emergency existed in the State of Louisiana because of COVID-19 and expressly empowered the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and the Secretary of the Department of Health and/or the State Health Officer to take all actions authorized under state law;

WHEREAS, La. R.S. 29:761 provides that “[b]ecause the government must do all that is reasonable and necessary to protect the health and safety of its citizens; because new and emerging dangers, including emergent and resurgent infectious diseases . . . pose serious and immediate threats; because a renewed focus on the prevention, detection, management, and containment of public health emergencies is essential; and because emergency health threats . . . may require the exercise of extraordinary government powers and functions, the state must have the ability to respond, rapidly and effectively, to potential or actual public health emergencies;”

WHEREAS, on December 21, 2021, the Governor renewed the emergency declaration for the COVID-19 Emergency, citing rising cases and the increased exposure due to gatherings during the holiday season; and on January 19, 2022, the Governor again renewed the emergency declaration in Proclamation No. 6 JBE 2022;

WHEREAS, the first cases of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 were confirmed in the United States in December, 2021;

WHEREAS, Louisiana Department of Health issued a press release on December 29, 2021 that Omicron cases were elevated in the state, and that "the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates the proportion of Omicron in HHS Region 6 (which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas) is 86.7%. Furthermore, 95% of parishes are at the 2 highest levels of community transmission;"

WHEREAS, parish and municipal employees are currently experiencing personnel shortages and absences due to the increase in reported Omicron variant cases since December;

WHEREAS, under La. R.S. 18:402(E)(1), the deadline to issue a proclamation ordering a special election for Spring 2022 was December 29, 2021, four weeks prior to the opening of the qualifying period for the special primary election;

WHEREAS, personnel shortages in the state due to Omicron infection rates have posed numerous challenges for parish and municipal government officials to meet the deadline for calling special elections for a primary date on March 26, 2022, and a general election date on April 30, 2022;

WHEREAS, Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin, in an Emergency Certification on January 20, 2022, certified to the Governor that a continued state of emergency exists that poses obstacles to parish and municipal officials in meeting the deadline established under La. R.S. 18:402(E)(1) for scheduling a spring primary election for March 26, 2022 and a general election date for April 30, 2022; and Secretary Ardoin recommended that an executive order be issued to suspend the December 29, 2021 deadline and reschedule it to January 21, 2022; and

WHEREAS, a state of emergency exists and it is necessary to suspend and reschedule the deadline established under La. R.S. 18:402(E)(1) to protect the health and safety of the voters of Louisiana.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JOHN BEL EDWARDS, Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:

SECTION 1: The provisions of La. R.S. 18:402(E)(1), which would have set a December 29, 2021, deadline for parish and municipal officials to issue a proclamation ordering a special election, are hereby suspended.

SECTION 2: The deadline for parish and municipal officials to issue a proclamation ordering a special election under La. R.S. 18:402(E)(1), previously set for December 29, 2021, is hereby rescheduled to January 21, 2022, for a special primary election on March 26, 2022, and a general election on April 30, 2022, with qualifying dates set for January 26 through January 28, 2022.

SECTION 3: The deadline for ordering proposition elections pursuant to La. R.S. 18:1285(B) or La. R.S. 18:1300(C), previously set for December 29, 2022, shall not be suspended or rescheduled.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 21st day of January, 2022.

GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA

**ATTEST BY THE SECRETARY
OF STATE**

SECRETARY OF STATE