In November 2020, voters in 55 of Louisiana’s 64 parishes voted to authorize sports wagering in their respective parishes. Sports wagering, however, is not yet being offered in the state because the Louisiana Legislature and Louisiana Gaming Control Board first need to implement operational-, tax-, and licensing-related rules to govern the activity.

With the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature now in full swing, several sports wagering bills have been introduced that, if enacted into law, will establish the regulatory framework for the conduct of sports wagering. This update is intended to provide a brief overview of three of the key bills currently being considered by the Louisiana Legislature: Senate Bill 247, House Bill 697, and Senate Bill 142.

**Senate Bill 247**, originally introduced by Senate President Page Cortez (R-Lafayette) as Senate Bill 202, aims to set a fixed number of licenses, 20 in total, to operate sportsbooks in Louisiana and to expressly permit sports wagering to be conducted both remotely and in brick-and-mortar facilities. Under Senate Bill 247,
the 20 sportsbook licenses would be made available to the Louisiana Lottery, the 15 riverboat casinos operating in the state, the four horseracing tracks, and the land-based casino in New Orleans, in that order. On May 11, 2021, the Senate Committee on Judiciary B advanced Senate Bill 247 to the full body of the Louisiana Senate, which passed the bill by a vote of 31-6 on May 20. Senate Bill 247 next needs to be approved by the Louisiana House. On May 25, the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice reported the bill with certain amendments, and the bill was referred to the Legislative Bureau for further consideration. Coming from the Senate with broad support, it is expected to pass in the House and be signed into law by Governor Edwards. It would then be incumbent upon the Louisiana Gaming Control Board to promulgate and approve corresponding regulations.

**House Bill 697** aims to set tax- and fee-related rules for the conduct of sports wagering. Originally introduced by Rep. John Stefanski (R-Crowley) as House Bill 628, a substitute version of the bill is now proceeding as House Bill 697 and serves as the tax-related complement to Senate Bill 247. That is, among other fees, House Bill 697 would charge each of the 20 sportsbook licensees a one-time $250,000 application fee as well as a $500,000 license fee every five years. House Bill 697 would also impose a 10% tax on all bets placed by patrons who are on-site at a licensee’s facility and a 15% tax on all bets placed remotely. On May 11, 2021, the Louisiana House advanced House Bill 697 by a vote of 78-24, and the Louisiana Senate passed the bill by a vote of 32-4 on May 19.

**Senate Bill 247** and House Bill 697 will ultimately need to be transmitted to Gov. John Bel Edwards to either be signed into law or vetoed. Under the applicable rules, if the bills are transmitted to Edwards after the 2021 Regular Session ends on June 10, 2021, or within the final 10 days of the session, the governor would have 20 days from the date of transmittal to act on the bills before they automatically become law without his signature.

Senate Bill 142 was introduced by Sen. Rick Ward (R-Port Allen) and is an appropriations bill that, in its current form, would direct all revenue generated by sports wagering to Louisiana’s general treasury fund. On May 12, 2021, Senate Bill 142 was returned to the calendar and could be scheduled for a vote at any time.

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