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2026 LEGISLATURE
SESSION OPENS

Landry calls out 'incompetent' judges



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN BALLANCE

Gov. Jeff Landry addresses members of the Legislature on the opening day of the 2026 regular legislative session at the State Capitol on Monday.

Governor touts changes during 54-minute legislative speech

BY TYLER BRIDGES
Staff writer

Gov. Jeff Landry on Monday lambasted "incompetent" judges and called on lawmakers to hold them accountable as he recounted how a tourist in New Orleans was murdered in 2024 by a juvenile who he said was supposed to be under court supervision through an elec-

tronic ankle monitor because of previous crimes.

Six family members of the slain tourist, Jacob Carter, stood in the visitor's gallery overlooking the House chamber while state lawmakers rose to their feet and applauded in a show of respect.

The emotionally charged moment came near the end of a 54-minute speech by Landry that kicked off the 2026 regu-

lar legislative session. Until that point, the governor mostly extolled the changes that he and Republican legislators have enacted during the past two years that have swung the state to the right.

In a brief interview after the speech, Landry said he is supporting one piece of legislation that would reduce the

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Bill would allow for removal of judges, DAs

Proposal gives power to Landry, Legislature

BY MEGHAN FRIEDMANN
Staff writer

Gov. Jeff Landry, who has gone after the judiciary for decisions he says are too liberal, could get the power to recommend that Louisiana district attorneys

and judges be suspended or removed.

Senate Bill 123, filed for the legislative session starting Monday, would give him that power pending the passage of a constitutional amendment. That means Louisiana voters would have to approve the change at the polls.

State Sen. Jay Morris, R-West Monroe, who authored the legislation, said it was his idea to file the bill, which he hopes will help hold judges and prosecutors

accountable for incompetence and misconduct. He has not yet spoken with the governor about SB123, he said, though he hopes to win Landry's support.

Kate Kelly, a spokesperson for Landry, declined to comment.

Under the bill, the state Senate would have to affirm the governor's removal recommendation by a two-thirds vote.

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Oil prices, markets seesaw

Uncertainty of war as Iran names new leader fuels activity

BY JON GAMBRELL, JAMEY KEATEN and SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Oil prices surged and markets slid Monday after hard-line Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei was chosen to succeed his late father as Iran's supreme leader, signaling that Iran was digging in 10 days into the war launched by the United States and Israel.

Oil prices later fell, and the U.S. stock market closed higher, amid hope that the war with Iran may not last that long as world leaders discussed options. U.S. President Donald Trump indicated to a group of lawmakers at his golf club near Miami that the conflict may end soon.

CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

"We took a little excursion" to the Middle East "to get rid of some evil. And, I think you'll see it's going to be a short-term excursion," Trump said.

The war has choked off major supplies of oil and gas to world markets, led foreigners to flee from business hubs and prompted millions to seek shelter as bombs hit sites including military bases, government buildings, oil and water installations, hotels and at least one school.

Khamenei, a secretive 56-year-old cleric, is only the third supreme leader in the history of the Islamic Republic. He has close ties to the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which has been firing missiles and drones at Israel and Gulf Arab states since his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who had ruled since 1989, was killed during the war's opening salvo.

The appointment suggests Tehran is not close to giving up on what it considers a fight for the Islamic theocracy's survival.

Thousands poured into a central square in the capital, Tehran, and other

➤ **New footage raises likelihood U.S. struck Iranian school.** PAGE 2A
➤ **Officials shaped by combat after 9/11 grapple with Iran war.** PAGE 3A

➤ See **OIL**, page 6A

Abandoned hotel that recently caught fire to be demolished

BY ADAM DAIGLE
Acadiana business editor

An abandoned 180-room hotel that was recently the site of a fatal fire will soon be torn down.

Lafayette Consolidated Government gained approval in January to demolish the La Quinta Inn, 2100 N.E. Evangeline Thruway, which has been empty for nearly two years and has become a shelter for unhoused residents, records show.

The project is expected to go out for bid in the next two weeks be-

fore work can begin, LCG spokesperson Jamie Boudreaux said.

The move from LCG comes after a fire engulfed about 10 rooms of the hotel in November, fire officials said at the time. Levi Sahn, a 28-year-old man from North Dakota who had lived in Lafayette for eight months, died in the fire, Fire Department officials said.

The owners were ordered to demolish the building within 30 days after a Jan. 20 hearing, an administrative hearing officer ruled. The property, which also has a swim-

ming pool, is dilapidated and dangerous to the public welfare, the ruling indicated.

LCG can now proceed on demolition and place a lien on the property to recover costs of the demo. The property is owned by SSRP Investments of Denham Springs, records show.

The property went before a development review committee in January with a request to subdivide the property into two. The

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The old La Quinta Inn on Northeast Evangeline Thruway has been empty for nearly two years.

STAFF PHOTO BY LESLIE WESTBROOK

WEATHER
HIGH 82
LOW 70
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