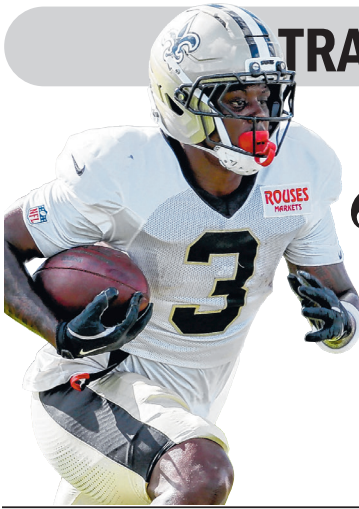




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The Times-Picayune

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

NOLA.COM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

\$2.00

ON THE LIST

Thousands of eligible Louisiana parents face long waits for childcare assistance



STAFF PHOTOS BY SOPHIA GERMER

Director Sonjia Brown-Joseph holds 9-month-old Archer Cooper and 6-month-old Rai'lynn Rhinehart at Clara's Little Lambs Preschool in New Orleans on Friday. Brown-Joseph tells parents applying for childcare assistance not to count on it.

BY PATRICK WALL, MORIAH BALINGIT and LAUREN COFFEY
Staff writer and Associated Press

Dynasty Bartholomew is determined to give her kids a better life.

She started training this year to become a medical assistant, making the program's honor roll while raising her three sons in Alexandria. While at school, she puts her 2-year-old in childcare — a necessity that, at \$720 a month, consumes most of her fixed income. She's had to seek help from relatives and local nonprofits to pay her other bills.

She is an ideal candidate for government-funded childcare assistance, which is supposed to enable needy parents to work or attend school without going broke. But eight months after Bartholomew was deemed eligible, she has yet to receive any aid.

"I always call and check, and they always give me the same status," she said. "I'm on the waiting list."

Childcare is notoriously expensive. Louisiana families who don't receive subsidies report paying an average of \$11,000 annually per



A classroom is decorated for kids at Clara's Little Lambs Preschool.

child — nearly as much as LSU's in-state tuition.

Childcare assistance, funded by the federal government with help from states, is meant to aid working parents who are low-income, homeless or caring for foster children. But waitlists have ballooned since 2023, when just eight states had them, according to an analysis by The Associated Press.

As of this spring, hundreds of

thousands of children were sitting on childcare assistance waitlists in 23 states and the District of Columbia, the analysis found. In Louisiana, more than 7,700 eligible children were on the waitlist this March, a 70% increase from the prior year, according to state data.

Many of the waitlists first started after \$28 billion in pandemic aid

➤ See **LIST**, page **5A**

State makes widespread changes to housing programs

\$20M grant among canceled projects

BY SOPHIE KASAKOVE
Staff writer

Louisiana developers were waiting last month to learn whether they had been awarded a share of \$20 million in federal grants aimed at boosting proposed affordable housing projects across Louisiana.

Instead, some applicants were stunned to receive a one-paragraph letter that said the program had been canceled.

"There needs to be more transparency from the Landry administration around their priorities," said Andreanecia Morris of the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance, a coalition of affordable housing developers and advocates. The state's housing policy "has just too many contradictions to feel comfortable and assured."

The subsidy is one of multiple programs the state's housing finance agency, tasked with providing affordable housing to low-income residents, has cut or delayed this year. Though the shifts have drawn some critics, state leaders, acting in line with federal strategy shifts, say they are reforming a troubled office and freeing up resources for other priorities.

"The Louisiana Housing Corporation has been transformed into an organization focused on transparency, accountability, and delivering

➤ See **HOUSING**, page **4A**

Midterm elections heading into the home stretch

BY PATRICK WHITTLE and BILL BARROW
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — Troy Jackson was a longtime labor activist and logger before he unexpectedly became the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate in Maine. On Monday, he returned to a union hall to tell workers they need to go to the polls this fall — to raise the minimum wage, expand family medical leave and show support for one another.

"Labor Day has never been just another holiday," Jackson told several hundred union members at a Southern Maine Labor Council event Monday in Portland. "Today, here with the people

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➤ See **MIDTERM**, page **5A**

Trump's Venezuelan oil deal could be good for Louisiana

But it will take time to come to fruition

BY MARK BALLARD
Staff writer

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump name-checked Louisiana as one of the places that will benefit from his new deal to open Venezuelan oil fields to U.S. control

in hopes of lowering prices at the pump.

That's because Louisiana refineries once received much of Venezuela's product before that country's mismanagement and U.S. sanctions reduced the flow to a trickle. Gulf Coast facilities have the expertise and technology to turn Venezuela's heavy, viscous crude into the gases and distillates that become gasoline, jet fuel, truck diesel and other consumer

products, but also thicker products like asphalt, chemicals and plastics.

"Louisiana has the refineries capable to process the kind of heavy crude coming from Venezuela, making our state a natural beneficiary of increased supply from the region," said Tommy Fauchaux, president of Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association, the

➤ See **OIL DEAL**, page **4A**



U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright, left, meets with acting Venezuelan President Delcy Rodríguez in Caracas, Venezuela, on Wednesday. ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

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Commentary**5B**

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Opinion**4B**

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