

# Louisiana Needs a RESET

Louisiana ranks 41<sup>st</sup> in population growth from 2010 to 2020, and a dismal 47<sup>th</sup> in personal income growth. The state has the second-highest poverty rate in the country and one of the highest incarceration rates. Only half of the state's third graders read on grade level.

Depending on the time period and the benchmark measured, the rankings might shift a few points for better or worse. But the overall picture does not change. It is a story all too familiar to Louisiana's citizens.

The problems seem daunting, almost intractable, but Louisiana can improve. A long history of poor policy choices created this situation. While there is no quick fix, making the right choices can turn this state around. In fact, it is the only way to do so. We need to change how we do business.

In short, we need a RESET.

That is why the Committee of 100, the Council for a Better Louisiana and the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana have partnered since 2019 with a goal to inform citizens and candidates about the state's core problems and the improvements needed to tackle them.

We need to improve our education system, enact tax and spending policies that make sense, build better infrastructure and strengthen public safety through thoughtful, evidence-based changes. Louisiana has a host of other problems, but it is hard to imagine significant progress for the state without addressing education, fiscal policy, infrastructure and crime.

Even if citizens and policymakers disagree with our specific recommendations, they can find valuable data and analysis to create their own solutions. Informed discussion and healthy debate are how societies progress.

Our three organizations have been engaged in government reform, accountability and transparency for decades: C100 since 1992, CABL since 1962 and PAR since 1950. We have recommended and spearheaded reform initiatives across those years, and we've got a record of wins together as RESET.

Since 2019, Louisiana has agreed to many of our recommendations.

On state finances, lawmakers and voters backed major tax reforms. On education, officials expanded access to high-quality early learning programs; enacted policies to prepare high school students for the workforce or college; and made targeted reinvestments in higher education. On public safety, the governor and lawmakers invested new dollars to combat recidivism and smooth the reentry process for offenders. On infrastructure, officials made substantial investments in Louisiana's road and bridge needs.

Still, so much more needs to be done.

Now is the time to be bold. Imagine a future where we are not worrying about whether our children will leave the state, but applauding Louisiana as a place where citizens prosper. It is possible. It just requires the right choices.