

ARTICLE I. DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

§1. Origin and Purpose of Government

Section 1. All government, of right, originates with the people, is founded on their will alone, and is instituted to protect the rights of the individual and for the good of the whole. Its only legitimate ends are to secure justice for all, preserve peace, protect the rights, and promote the happiness and general welfare of the people. The rights enumerated in this Article are inalienable by the state and shall be preserved inviolate by the state.

§2. Due Process of Law

Section 2. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, except by due process of law.

§3. Right to Individual Dignity

Section 3. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws. No law shall discriminate against a person because of race or religious ideas, beliefs, or affiliations. No law shall arbitrarily, capriciously, or unreasonably discriminate against a person because of birth, age, sex, culture, physical condition, or political ideas or affiliations. Slavery and involuntary servitude are prohibited, except in the latter case as punishment for crime.

§4. Right to Property

Section 4.(A) Every person has the right to acquire, own, control, use, enjoy, protect, and dispose of private property. This right is subject to reasonable statutory restrictions and the reasonable exercise of the police power.

(B)(1) Property shall not be taken or damaged by the state or its political subdivisions except for public purposes and with just compensation paid to the owner or into court for his benefit. Except as specifically authorized by Article VI, Section 21 of this Constitution property shall not be taken or damaged by the state or its political subdivisions: (a) for predominant use by any private person or entity; or (b) for transfer of ownership to any private person or entity.

(2) As used in Subparagraph (1) of this Paragraph and in Article VI, Section 23 of this Constitution, "public purpose" shall be limited to the following:

(a) A general public right to a definite use of the property.

(b) Continuous public ownership of property dedicated to one or more of the following objectives and uses:

(i) Public buildings in which publicly funded services are administered, rendered, or provided.

(ii) Roads, bridges, waterways, access to public waters and lands, and other public transportation, access, and navigational systems available to the general public.

(iii) Drainage, flood control, levees, coastal and navigational protection and reclamation for the benefit of the public generally.

(iv) Parks, convention centers, museums, historical buildings and recreational facilities generally open to the public.

(v) Public utilities for the benefit of the public generally.

(vi) Public ports and public airports to facilitate the transport of goods or persons in domestic or international commerce.

(c) The removal of a threat to public health or safety caused by the existing use or disuse of the property.

(3) Neither economic development, of tax revenue, or any incidental benefit to the public shall be considered in determining whether the taking or damaging of property is for a public purpose pursuant to Subparagraph (1) of this Paragraph or Article VI, Section 23 of this Constitution.

enhancement (4) Property shall not be taken or damaged by any private entity authorized by law to expropriate, except for a public and necessary purpose and with just compensation paid to the owner; in such proceedings, whether the purpose is public and necessary shall be a judicial question.

(5) In every expropriation or action to take property pursuant to the provisions of this Section, a party has the right to trial by jury to determine whether the compensation is just, and the owner shall be compensated to the full extent of his loss. Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, the full extent of loss shall include, but not be limited to, the appraised value of the property and all costs of relocation, inconvenience, and any other damages actually incurred by the owner because of the expropriation.

(6) No business enterprise or any of its assets shall be taken for the purpose of operating that enterprise or halting competition with a government enterprise. However, a municipality may expropriate a utility within its jurisdiction.

(C) Personal effects, other than contraband, shall never be taken.

(D) But the following property may be forfeited and disposed of in a civil proceeding, as provided by law: contraband drugs; property derived in whole or in part from contraband drugs; property used in the distribution, transfer, sale, felony possession, manufacture, or transportation of contraband drugs; property furnished or intended to be furnished in exchange for contraband drugs; property used or intended to be used to facilitate any of the above conduct; or other property because the above-described property has been rendered unavailable.

(E) This Section shall not apply to appropriation of property necessary for levee and levee drainage purposes.

(F) Further, the legislature may place limitations on the extent of recovery for the taking of, or loss or damage to, property rights affected by coastal wetlands conservation, management, preservation, enhancement, creation, or restoration activities.

(G) Compensation paid for the taking of, or loss or damage to, property rights for the construction, enlargement, improvement, or modification of federal or non-federal hurricane protection projects, including mitigation related thereto, shall not exceed the compensation required by the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America. However, this Paragraph shall not apply to compensation paid for a building or structure that was destroyed or damaged by an event for which a presidential declaration of major disaster or emergency was issued, if the taking occurs within three years of such event. The legislature by law may provide procedures and definitions for the provisions of this Paragraph.

(H)(1) Except for leases or operation agreements for port facilities, highways, qualified transportation facilities or airports, the state or its political subdivisions shall not sell or lease property which has been expropriated and held for not more than thirty years without first offering the property to the original owner or his heir, or, if there is no heir, to the successor in title to the owner at the time of expropriation at

the current fair market value, after which the property can only be transferred by competitive bid open to the general public. After thirty years have passed from the date the property was expropriated, the state or political subdivision may sell or otherwise transfer the property as provided by law.

(2) Within one year after the completion of the project for which the property was expropriated, the state or its political subdivision which expropriated the property shall identify all property which is not necessary for the public purpose of the project and declare the property as surplus property.

(3) All expropriated property identified as surplus property shall be offered for sale to the original owner or his heir, or, if there is no heir, to the successor in title to the owner at the time of expropriation at the current fair market value, within two years after completion of the project. If the original owner, heir, or other successor in title refuses or fails to purchase the surplus property within three years from completion of the project, then the surplus property may be offered for sale to the general public by competitive bid.

(4) After one year from the completion of the project for which property was expropriated, the original owner or his heir, or, if there is no heir, the successor in title to the owner at the time of expropriation may petition the state or its political subdivision which expropriated the property to have all or any portion of his property declared surplus. If the state or its political subdivision refuses or fails to identify all or any portion of the expropriated property as surplus, the original owner or the successor in title may petition any court of competent jurisdiction to have the property declared surplus.

Amended by Acts 1989, No. 840, §1, approved Oct. 7, 1989, eff. Nov. 7, 1989; Acts 2003, No. 1295, §1, approved Oct. 4, 2003, eff. Nov. 6, 2003; Acts 2003, No. 1304, §1, approved Oct. 4, 2003, eff. Nov. 6, 2003; Acts 2006, No. 851, §1, approved Sept. 30, 2006, eff. Oct. 31, 2006; Acts 2006, No. 853, §1, approved Sept. 30, 2006, eff. Oct. 31, 2006; Acts 2006, No. 859, §1, approved Sept. 30, 2006, eff. Oct. 31, 2006.

§5. Right to Privacy

Section 5. Every person shall be secure in his person, property, communications, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches, seizures, or invasions of privacy. No warrant shall issue without probable cause supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, the persons or things to be seized, and the lawful purpose or reason for the search. Any person adversely affected by a search or seizure conducted in violation of this Section shall have standing to raise its illegality in the appropriate court.

§6. Freedom from Intrusion

Section 6. No person shall be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner or lawful occupant.

§7. Freedom of Expression

Section 7. No law shall curtail or restrain the freedom of speech or of the press. Every person may speak, write, and publish his sentiments on any subject, but is responsible for abuse of that freedom.

§8. Freedom of Religion

Section 8. No law shall be enacted respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

§9. Right of Assembly and Petition

Section 9. No law shall impair the right of any person to assemble peaceably or to petition government for a redress of grievances.

§10. Right to Vote; Disqualification from Seeking or Holding an Elective Office

Section 10.(A) Right to Vote. Every citizen of the state, upon reaching eighteen years of age, shall have the right to register and vote, except that this right may be suspended while a person is interdicted and judicially declared mentally incompetent or is under an order of imprisonment for conviction of a felony.

(B) Disqualification. The following persons shall not be permitted to qualify as a candidate for elective public office or take public elective office or appointment of honor, trust, or profit in this state:

(1) A person who has been convicted within this state of a felony and who has exhausted all legal remedies, or who has been convicted under the laws of any other state or of the United States or of any foreign government or country of a crime which, if committed in this state, would be a felony and who has exhausted all legal remedies and has not afterwards been pardoned either by the governor of this state or by the officer of the state, nation, government or country having such authority to pardon in the place where the person was convicted and sentenced.

(2) A person actually under an order of imprisonment for conviction of a felony.

(C) Exception. Notwithstanding the provisions of Paragraph (B) of this Section, a person who desires to qualify as a candidate for or hold an elective office, who has been convicted of a felony and who has served his sentence, but has not been pardoned for such felony, shall be permitted to qualify as a candidate for or hold such office if the date of his qualifying for such office is more than fifteen years after the date of the completion of his original sentence.

Acts 1997, No. 1492, §1, approved Oct. 3, 1998, eff. Nov. 5, 1998.

§11. Right to Keep and Bear Arms

Section 11. The right of each citizen to keep and bear arms shall not be abridged, but this provision shall not prevent the passage of laws to prohibit the carrying of weapons concealed on the person.

§12. Freedom from Discrimination

Section 12. In access to public areas, accommodations, and facilities, every person shall be free from discrimination based on race, religion, or national ancestry and from arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable discrimination based on age, sex, or physical condition.

§13. Rights of the Accused

Section 13. When any person has been arrested or detained in connection with the investigation or commission of any offense, he shall be advised fully of the reason for his arrest or detention, his right to remain silent, his right against self incrimination, his right to the assistance of counsel and, if indigent, his right to court appointed counsel. In a criminal prosecution, an accused shall be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation against him. At each stage of the proceedings, every person is entitled to assistance of counsel of his choice, or appointed by the court if he is indigent and charged with an offense punishable by imprisonment. The legislature shall provide for a uniform system for securing and compensating qualified counsel for indigents.

§14. Right to Preliminary Examination

Section 14. The right to a preliminary examination shall not be denied in felony cases except when the accused is indicted by a grand jury.

§15. Initiation of Prosecution

Section 15. Prosecution of a felony shall be initiated by indictment or information, but no person shall be held to answer for a capital crime or a crime punishable by life imprisonment except on indictment by a grand jury. No person shall be twice placed in jeopardy for the same offense, except on his application for a new trial, when a mistrial is declared, or when a motion in arrest of judgment is sustained.

§16. Right to a Fair Trial

Section 16. Every person charged with a crime is presumed innocent until proven guilty and is entitled to a speedy, public, and impartial trial in the parish where the offense or an element of the offense occurred, unless venue is changed in accordance with law. No person shall be compelled to give evidence against himself. An accused is entitled to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against him, to compel the attendance of witnesses, to present a defense, and to testify in his own behalf. However, nothing in this Section or any other section of this constitution shall prohibit the legislature from enacting a law to require a trial court to instruct a jury in a criminal trial that the governor is empowered to grant a reprieve, pardon, or commutation of sentence following conviction of a crime, that the governor in exercising such authority may commute or modify a sentence of life imprisonment without benefit of parole to a lesser sentence which includes the possibility of parole, may commute a sentence of death to a lesser sentence of life imprisonment without benefit of parole, or may allow the release of an offender either by reducing a life imprisonment or death sentence to the time already served by the offender or by granting the offender a pardon.

§17. Jury Trial in Criminal Cases; Joinder of Felonies; Mode of Trial

Section 17.(A) Jury Trial in Criminal Cases. A criminal case in which the punishment may be capital shall be tried before a jury of twelve persons, all of whom must concur to render a verdict. A case in which the punishment is necessarily confinement at hard labor shall be tried before a jury of twelve persons, ten of whom must concur to render a verdict. A case in which the punishment may be confinement at hard labor or confinement without hard labor for more than six months shall be tried before a jury of six persons, all of whom must concur to render a verdict. The accused shall have a right to full voir dire examination of prospective jurors and to challenge jurors peremptorily. The number of challenges shall be fixed by law. Except in capital cases, a defendant may knowingly and intelligently waive his right to a trial by jury.

(B) Joinder of Felonies; Mode of Trial. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, offenses in which punishment is necessarily confinement at hard labor may be charged in the same indictment or information with offenses in which the punishment may be confinement at hard labor; provided, however, that the joined offenses are of the same or similar character or are based on the same act or transaction or on two or more acts or transactions connected together or constituting parts of a common scheme or plan; and provided further, that cases so joined shall be tried by a jury composed of twelve jurors, ten of whom must concur to render a verdict.

Acts 1997, No. 1502, §1, approved Oct. 3, 1998, eff. Nov. 5, 1998.

§18. Right to Bail

Section 18.(A) Excessive bail shall not be required. Before and during a trial, a person shall be bailable by sufficient surety, except when he is charged with a capital offense and the proof is evident and the presumption of guilt is great. After conviction and before sentencing, a person shall be bailable if the maximum sentence which may be imposed is imprisonment for five years or less; and the judge may grant bail if the maximum sentence which may be imposed is imprisonment exceeding five years. After sentencing and until final judgment, a person shall be bailable if the sentence actually imposed is five years or less; and the judge may grant bail if the sentence actually imposed exceeds imprisonment for five years.

(B) However, a person charged with a crime of violence as defined by law or with production, manufacture, distribution, or dispensing or possession with intent to produce, manufacture, distribute, or

dispense a controlled dangerous substance as defined by the Louisiana Controlled Dangerous Substances Law, and the proof is evident and the presumption of guilt is great, shall not be bailable if, after a contradictory hearing, the judge or magistrate finds by clear and convincing evidence that there is a substantial risk that the person may flee or poses an imminent danger to any other person or the community.

Acts 1997, No. 1498, §1, approved Oct. 3, 1998, eff. Nov. 5, 1998.

§19. Right to Judicial Review

Section 19. No person shall be subjected to imprisonment or forfeiture of rights or property without the right of judicial review based upon a complete record of all evidence upon which the judgment is based. This right may be intelligently waived. The cost of transcribing the record shall be paid as provided by law.

§20. Right to Humane Treatment

Section 20. No law shall subject any person to euthanasia, to torture, or to cruel, excessive, or unusual punishment. Full rights of citizenship shall be restored upon termination of state and federal supervision following conviction for any offense.

§21. Writ of Habeas Corpus

Section 21. The writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended.

§22. Access to Courts

Section 22. All courts shall be open, and every person shall have an adequate remedy by due process of law and justice, administered without denial, partiality, or unreasonable delay, for injury to him in his person, property, reputation, or other rights.

§23. Prohibited Laws

Section 23. No bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts shall be enacted.

§24. Unenumerated Rights

Section 24. The enumeration in this constitution of certain rights shall not deny or disparage other rights retained by the individual citizens of the state.

§25. Rights of a Victim

Section 25. Any person who is a victim of crime shall be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect, and shall be informed of the rights accorded under this Section. As defined by law, a victim of crime shall have the right to reasonable notice and to be present and heard during all critical stages of preconviction and postconviction proceedings; the right to be informed upon the release from custody or the escape of the accused or the offender; the right to confer with the prosecution prior to final disposition of the case; the right to refuse to be interviewed by the accused or a representative of the accused; the right to review and comment upon the presentence report prior to imposition of sentence; the right to seek restitution; and the right to a reasonably prompt conclusion of the case. The legislature shall enact laws to implement this Section. The evidentiary and procedural laws of this state shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with this Section.

Nothing in this Section shall be construed to inure to the benefit of an accused or to confer upon any

person the right to appeal or seek supervisory review of any judicial decision made in a criminal proceeding. Nothing in this Section shall be the basis for an award of costs or attorney fees, for the appointment of counsel for a victim, or for any cause of action for compensation or damages against the state of Louisiana, a political subdivision, a public agency, or a court, or any officer, employee, or agent thereof. Remedies to enforce the rights enumerated in this Section shall be provided by law.

Acts 1997, No. 1487, §1, approved Oct. 3, 1998, eff. Nov. 5, 1998.

§26. State Sovereignty

Section 26. The people of this state have the sole and exclusive right of governing themselves as a free and sovereign state; and do, and forever hereafter shall, exercise and enjoy every power, jurisdiction, and right, pertaining thereto, which is not, or may not hereafter be, by them expressly delegated to the United States of America in congress assembled.

Acts 1997, No. 1494, §1, approved Oct. 3, 1998, eff. Nov. 5, 1998.

§27. Freedom to Hunt, Fish and Trap

Section 27. The freedom to hunt, fish, and trap wildlife, including all aquatic life, traditionally taken by hunters, trappers and anglers, is a valued natural heritage that shall be forever preserved for the people. Hunting, fishing and trapping shall be managed by law and regulation consistent with Article IX, Section I of the Constitution of Louisiana to protect, conserve and replenish the natural resources of the state. The provisions of this Section shall not alter the burden of proof requirements otherwise established by law for any challenge to a law or regulation pertaining to hunting, fishing or trapping the wildlife of the state, including all aquatic life. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to authorize the use of private property to hunt, fish, or trap without the consent of the owner of the property.

Added by Acts 2004, No. 927, §1, approved Nov. 2, 2004, eff. Dec. 7, 2004.

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