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**The Book That Started the Conversation on Louisiana’s Nonunanimous Jury Verdicts, Updated Since Law Was Struck Down**  
*LSU Press to re-release Jim Crow’s Last Stand in September*

**Baton Rouge, LA**— A remnant of the racist post-Reconstruction Redeemer sociopolitical agenda, Louisiana’s nonunanimous jury-verdict law permitted juries to convict criminal defendants with only nine, and later ten, out of twelve votes: a legal oddity, even for southern states. On the surface, this decision was said to speed convictions, bringing convicts more swiftly to justice. In practice, the law funneled many of those convicted—especially African American men and women—into Louisiana’s burgeoning convict lease system. Although it faced multiple legal challenges through the years, the nonunanimous jury-verdict law remained on the books well after convict leasing had ended. Despite the law’s fraught history, until recently, few were even aware of its existence, let alone its original purpose or modern consequences. In fact, the original publication of *Jim Crow’s Last Stand* was one of the first attempts to call attention to the historical injustice caused by Louisiana’s nonunanimous jury-verdict law.

In this remarkable study, historian Thomas Aiello unpacks the origins of the statute in Bourbon Louisiana—a period when white Democrats sought to “redeem” their state after Reconstruction—and traces its survival through the civil rights era of the 1950s and 1960s, and the Supreme Court’s decision in *Johnson v. Louisiana* (1972), which narrowly validated the state’s criminal conviction policy. Spanning more than a hundred years of Louisiana law and history, *Jim Crow’s Last Stand* investigates the ways in which the legal policies and patterns of incarceration contributed to a new and lasting form of racial inequality in the state.

Available for the first time in paperback, this updated edition of *Jim Crow’s Last Stand* describes events in Louisiana since the book’s original publication, including the successful effort to create a new state constitutional amendment to overturn the nonunanimous jury practice and return Louisiana’s jury standard to unanimity, a policy that officially went into effect on January 1, 2019. Aiello’s research aided in the overturning of this century-old law. In the wake of these changes, *Jim Crow’s Last Stand* continues to serve as a cautionary tale about the far-reaching effects of Jim Crow-era legislation.

**Thomas Aiello** is associate professor of history and African American studies at Valdosta State University. He is the author of dozens of books and articles analyzing black cultural and intellectual history.

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History / Social Science / Legal History

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