



Ascension Republican Parish Executive Committee

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February 3, 2006

TO: The Louisiana Legislature, House and Senate Members

The Ascension Republican Parish Executive Committee met in January and formulated a list of recommendations for the Louisiana Legislature to consider in the 2006 Special Session. We focused our attention on three items, which we believe to be most essential to the well being of our State.

Defend our voting rights: The first concern is that the hurricanes not be used as an excuse to compromise or in any way tamper with our existing voting laws. Under our current law, all voters are afforded the right and the privilege to vote, or to refrain from voting, according to their conscience. Every registered voter, including those displaced by Katrina or Rita, has the ability to request and execute an Absentee Ballot if he or she finds that to be more convenient than going to the precinct polling place on election day. We have a good system now. Tampering with it in any way will only confuse people and encourage voter fraud.

Take care of the Levees: The Orleans Levee District and its board of political appointees were created in 1890. After his 1928 election, Huey P. Long packed the board with his cronies. The Orleans board gradually purchased or seized thousands of acres of land for the flood-control system and built two marinas on its lakefront property. Tracts along the lake were sold for subdivision and development in the 1940s and 1950s and became the priciest real estate in the city. The board's biggest recent gambit was signing a lease with the Belle of Orleans casino and spending millions building roads to the marina. We love the colorful history of our state as much as anybody but, after all is said and done, *somebody has to look after the levees!* We urge the Legislature to restructure the Levee Board system and make it simple and professional. The Levee Board must have only one job: to plan, construct, inspect and maintain a good flood control system for the endangered areas.

Avoid all appearance of corruption: We recognize that the task facing the Legislature and all areas of government is huge and daunting in the wake of this monstrous disaster. We know that you will work tirelessly and give your best efforts to the job ahead. We also recognize that the eyes of the nation are upon us, and that our reputation as a backward and corrupt state is unfavorably coloring the view that other states have of Louisiana. We therefore urge you to be especially mindful of our image and to be careful to avoid anything that gives even a hint of corruption to our fellow citizens.

We ask that the Legislature give every consideration to these points in the February session and use the Katrina-Rita disaster as an opportunity for the revitalization of the entire state of Louisiana.

Cordially,

Harold A. LaCour
Chairman, Republican Party of Ascension Parish