

New Orleans City Council

Councilmember-at-Large  
Arnie Fielkow

**Council President Arnie Fielkow  
Proposes Legislation Banning Weapons  
From City Parks and Recreational Facilities**

**News Release**

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New Orleans, LA - August 19, 2009 - Council President Arnie Fielkow will introduce legislation Thursday, which aims to ban illegal possession of firearms or weapons in public buildings and within 1,000 feet of recreational facilities, as a response to the near-tragic, Aug. 10 shooting at the New Orleans Recreation Department's (NORD) St. Bernard Community Center.

Council President Fielkow, in an effort to make the city's parks and recreational facilities safer, will introduce an ordinance for first reading that would make it illegal for anyone to possess "any weapon or firearm, ammunition or components of firearms or ammunition, while in a public building," other than a law enforcement officer or any other persons duly authorized to carry weapons. Any person who is convicted of a violation of this section shall be fined a penalty of \$500 and imprisoned for six months, the maximum allowed under municipal law. The ordinance also would make it illegal for any person, other than law enforcement or other authorized persons, to possess or utilize weaponry within 1,000 feet of a recreational facility.

Recreational facilities are defined as any "public or privately owned and/or operated facility which is authorized, permitted or licensed for the conduct of picnics, athletic or similar leisure activities, including but not

limited to: parks, playgrounds, swimming facilities, gymnasiums, stadiums and community and neighborhood centers."

"The drive-by shooting at NORD's St. Bernard Community Center last week is a disturbing example of how far criminals have descended in their utter lack of compassion and concern for their fellow humans," said Fielkow.

"Three people were shot - thankfully not fatally - while coaches were gathered in the NORD center. We are extremely fortunate we are not, this week, burying dozens of our city's children."

"We as leaders must maximize the penalties for any callous person willing to employ a weapon in the vicinity of a public building, park or recreational facility," Fielkow said.

As a matter of procedure, once introduced, the earliest this legislation could be up for passage by a full vote of the council would be at the Sept. 3 council meeting.

In conjunction with the ordinance, Council President Fielkow is additionally filing a resolution urging the Louisiana Legislature to allow all municipalities to pass more stringent laws to address the violent crime and the abhorrent threat of violent crime against New Orleans youth.

"The city is largely pre-empted by state law when it comes to enacting legislation involving weapons use, which contributes to violent crime," said Fielkow. "For that reason, I am proposing the City Council pass the maximum penalty we are allowed to impose and, by resolution, ask that the Legislature pass additional laws next spring in an effort to deter violence against our city's most precious asset - our youth."

## New Orleans City Council

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; Council Vice President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.