

Joint Council Statement: 2008 Presidential Debate Site Selection

Statement

November 20, 2007

Contact:
Ronald J. Pursell
Council Chief of Staff
(504) 658-1082
ripursell@cityofno.com

Quick Links

[New Orleans
City Council](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

New Orleans - November 20, 2007 - The Presidential Debate Commission's reasoning for passing on New Orleans as a debate site is not justified. Post Katrina, New Orleans has twice successfully hosted its signature events - Mardi Gras and Jazz Festival and will host the Sugar Bowl, the College Football National Championship, Mardi Gras and the National Basketball Association's All-Star Game - all within a six-week period early next year. Our willingness to pay for related debate expenses coupled with our capabilities with regard to hotel rooms and a proven record of being America's host city is unrivaled.

This was a clear missed opportunity for our nation's presidential candidates to be present in a city that is experiencing the reality of all of the challenging issues facing every American city.

New Orleans and its citizens are dealing with public safety and crime issues, education, healthcare delivery, housing shortages, high utility costs, infrastructure challenges and employment and labor shortages - all issues debated everyday by potential presidential candidates.

Given the national attention and support that New Orleans has received in its efforts to recover and rebuild - this decision comes as a surprise and a disappointment.

It is unfortunate that our nation will not be given the opportunity to view the presidential debate in a forum that is the best suited for a discussion of relevant issues facing our country. We urge the commission to reconsider its decision.

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 Michael C. Darnell; Council District "A" Shelley Midura; Council District "B" Stacy S. Head; Council District "C" James Carter; Council District "D" Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and Council District "E" Cynthia Willard-Lewis.