

Statement

July 15, 2009



Councilmember Midura

**Councilmember Midura Statement
Re: 2010 City Council Election**

New Orleans, LA - July 15, 2009 - Dear Citizens of District "A" and the City of New Orleans:

It has been a privilege to serve the City of New Orleans as the District "A" Councilmember for the last three years. I have been humbled by this honor, and am forever grateful to all who had confidence in my ability and entrusted me with the opportunity to represent the district.

During my time in office, I have aspired to be a reformer of government systems, watchdog of public funds, and champion of accountability and better government. I am proud of the accomplishments my office has achieved in these areas, the highlight of which was spearheading the creation and funding of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to fight corruption, mismanagement, and government waste. I believe the creation of this office is the single most important step the City has taken toward reform of government and will have historic impact as it grows with charter-protected funding. Please click [here](#) to view a list of highlights during my time in office as District "A" Councilmember.

After much thought and reflection, I have decided that I will not be a candidate for re-election to the District "A" City Council seat in 2010. Having experienced first-hand the challenges of running a long-shot campaign in 2006, I wanted to make this decision publicly as early as possible for the benefit of potential candidates in District "A" so they may have enough time to decide whether to seek election. I believe the City Council will benefit from continued new blood at the dais and look forward to supporting a candidate who will pick up the mantle of reform and continue the march toward good government.

Like so many of you, Hurricane Katrina was a call to duty for me, and I felt a deep sense of obligation to

contribute to the recovery of the City of New Orleans in a significant way; hence my run for and subsequent election to the District A seat in the 2006 race. I have fulfilled my campaign promises: the OIG has been created and funded, the charter has been amended to require a master plan to guide land use decisions (rather than continued politicization); the Council has approved and funded the establishment of a public/private economic development entity, the City is better prepared for hurricanes, and the neighborhoods have been deeply engaged with my Council office throughout my term. As Iagnippe, we have made significant long-term structural reforms to the criminal justice system through the involvement of the Vera Institute, and we have approved a citywide energy efficiency program the details of which are currently under development.

True public service requires a deep sacrifice of time and a selfless commitment to pursuing the common good. My personal goal for public service never was to build a Midura family political machine. Indeed, career public servants too often forget that "service" is to the public, rather than to themselves. Too often the political courage needed to confront the most difficult decisions we as public officials must make is compromised in the quest for re-election or election to the next public office. Rather, my hope was to improve the lives of our citizens and their fair access to opportunity by achieving significant reforms that would position the City for a stronger future. By example and for similar motivations, I hoped like-minded individuals would re-engage in the public policy arena.

While much work remains, I believe this goal has been accomplished, and my period in city government has served its purpose. I look forward to returning to life in the private sector.

While I make this announcement early so that others may toss their hat in the ring with enough time to raise funds and run a successful campaign, there is still much work to be done over the next 10 months. As far as we have come since the storm, we still have miles to go before we can rest. The work ahead is evident on my daily drive by pockmarked streets, lights that still don't work, homes and businesses that remain vacant, and parks and pools that sit unlit and empty. And almost everyday I read about yet another senseless murder.

What troubles me most about New Orleans is the democracy gap between the priorities of the people and the priorities of the decision-makers in power. Too many of our elected officials and influential citizens continue to do the public wrong by protecting the status quo or their own self-interest. Rather than using data or best practices or evidence of success, policy and budget decisions with long-term consequences for the City's future are too often made in the absence of sufficient public input, and instead on the basis of personal whim, anecdotal evidence, or alliance with entrenched institutions that have much to lose or gain by a given decision. Make no mistake about it: defending the status quo is not in the best interest of this City, and anyone who does so is not putting the City's interest ahead of their own. The status quo has not worked, is not working, and will not work to make New Orleans a world-class city. I will spend the last year or so of my term fighting adherents to the status quo, as I believe our greatest hope for the future lies in continued reform.

The process of deciding whether or not to run for this seat in 2010 has led me to focus on what I want to get done for the City while I am still serving and in a position to effect change. Constituents should continue to expect honest and candid discussion from me as I will be as or more vocal than ever about our city's continuing challenges, the greatest of which is the daunting budget shortfall we will face in 2010 and how we choose to cut spending to make ends meet. To a great extent our success will depend on active public participation and support of these efforts, and I urge you to become part of the debate so that the democracy gap is reduced and your priorities will be reflected by the votes of your elected officials.

Answering the question, "Is this in the best interest of the City of New Orleans" has been my guiding principle over the last three years, and it will continue to be the basis for every decision I make, position

I defend or advocate, and points I raise on any given issue. Thank you for trusting in me to make sure the answer is always "yes."

Sincerely,
Shelley

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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 S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.