



PAR Publishes Guide To Louisiana Amendments

October 12, 2006

The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana (PAR) today released its "Guide to the Proposed Constitutional Amendments" for the **Nov. 7 ballot** ballot, which explains the potential impact of the eight proposals facing the public in the upcoming election. The "Guide" is available on PAR's Web site at www.la-par.org. Printed copies will be available next week.

"The PAR 'Guide' helps voters to see clearly the pros and cons of voting for each amendment," said Jim Brandt, president of PAR. "With fewer amendments on less complex topics, we hope this ballot will draw more voters to the polls."

The November ballot includes proposals that would:

- consolidate the New Orleans assessors' offices,
- change property tax laws,
- increase the severance tax revenue sharing limit,
- allow for the creation of juvenile and family courts, and
- create a new school district in the Baton Rouge area.

The "Guide" provides background for each of the proposals, describes the proposed changes and presents commentary that includes the arguments of the proponents and opponents of the proposal.

Voters approved 13 amendments on the Sept. 30 ballot, but turnout was exceptionally low at 22 percent. The two 2006 ballots include the highest number of proposed amendments (21) to be voted on in a single year since the adoption of the current Constitution in 1974.

Following this election, voters will have considered 210 amendments since the 1974 Constitution was adopted. Thus far, 140 amendments have been approved. Typically, amendments are designed to deal with emerging issues, authorize new programs or policies, seek exceptions or protections for specific interests or correct errors in existing provisions. Unfortunately, as more detail is placed in the Constitution, more amendments may be required as conditions change or problems arise with earlier provisions. In evaluating each of the current proposals, Brandt urged voters to consider not only the merits of the amendment, but also whether the proposed language belongs in the Constitution.

PAR members will receive a free copy of the "Guide to the Proposed Constitutional Amendments for the November 7, 2006, Ballot." Others may order copies for \$3.50 each by writing PAR at P.O. Box 14776, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-4776, or by calling (225) 926-8414. Special pricing is available for bulk orders.