

BRIEFING BOOK

News and views from the Louisiana Capitol

Sunday, September 30, 2007

TOP OF THE NEWS

Amendments guide is offered by group

The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, a nonpartisan, issues-oriented organization, has released its "Guide to the Proposed Constitutional Amendments" that voters will be asked to approve or reject in the Oct. 20 election. Council President Jim Brandt said the guide does not take a stand on the four proposals on the ballot but is "designed to help voters understand the propositions and determine for themselves whether to vote for or against each amendment." Two of the proposals deal with state supplemental pay for police officers and firefighters; a third deals with future retirement benefits for state retirement systems and how those benefits must be financed; and the fourth deals with a property tax exemption for jewelry held on consignment. "The good news is that there are only four, fairly straightforward proposals to consider in 2007, as opposed to more lengthy and complex ballots in previous years," Brandt said. He said PAR also has a second publication called "Questioning Candidates Beyond the Platitudes." Brandt said the booklet is designed to help voters understand issues and provide possible questions to pose to candidates on a range of topics, including tax restructuring, strengthening the work force through education, health-care financing and finding money for "big ticket needs," like coastal protection, rebuilding storm-damaged areas, financing public retirement debt and transportation needs. The policy issues are available at www.la-par.org. The guide to the constitutional amendments are available for \$3.50 each by writing the council at P.O. Box 14776, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-4776, by calling (225) 926-8414, and on the Web site. Brandt said "special pricing" for the guide is available for bulk orders.