

## Letter: Gov. Jindal's veto criteria flawed

Published: Jul 29, 2008 - Page: 6B

It is extremely important to note that the Public Affairs Research Council has recognized that the governor has selectively left in pet projects for lawmakers that indeed do not match the criteria he set for NGOs. One has to just question the definition of regional and look through the budget to see that many of the projects left in have a single-area affect. Which brings me to my assertion that the criterion is flawed.

The YMCA of the Capital Region covers nine parishes. The money that was requested via that organization was vetoed. Louisiana Art and Science Museum is indeed a regional museum with children from all over the state coming to visit the facility, but it was vetoed. If any of you had the opportunity to read Thursday's (July 17) paper in the FOOD section re: the McKinley High school students working with LSU in the Summer Experience, that program would have been administered by McKinley alumni for \$20,000 and has become a model program for other high schools in the Capital Area. But it too was vetoed. Options Inc., which provides assistance and housing to mental health patients, was also vetoed. Capital Area Legal Services, which provides legal assistance to low income citizens, is also regional yet it was vetoed.

So what did stay in the budget that is not regional? Here is a very brief listing: City of Gretna Heritage Festival, yet the Balloon Festival was vetoed; Napoleonville for improvements to its Community Center; St. Mary Parish for recreational improvements to a local park; and all of the various cities and townships that will receive dollars without accountability attached to the award.

In addition, these organizations, as well as most, did not defend their case before the Legislature or Joint Budget Committee, but many did, and even those were vetoed.

It is difficult for anyone to agree that the process used was a fair/consistent one. I perceive it to be possibly an opportunity for the governor to reward those who assisted in passing legislation attached to his agenda and to not look favorably upon those who didn't. Bottom line is that those organizations which did not get funded were all providing services directly to constituents in various districts, and I guess unless the governor shares any additional information, it will be a mystery on why those that remain in the budget were more favorable than those cut. I reiterate my prior statement, "If state governmental agencies provided all of the services needed in various communities, there would not be a need for the non-governmental agencies to exist." As far as the idea of private funding, I won't hold my breath to see the public step up to fund programs in these poor disenfranchised communities.

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