

Councilmember Fielkow Announces Poll Results Supporting Charter Change To Create NORD Commission

New Orleans, LA - August 18, 2010 - A recent poll commissioned by the New Orleans Recreation Department Citizens Advisory Panel (NORD CAP) shows that the majority of New Orleans voters support a change in the City Charter that would create a Public/Private Partnership to oversee the operation of the New Orleans Recreation Department. City Council President Arnie Fielkow, who has been one of the chief advocates for NORD Reform, was instrumental in creating the NORD CAP to study best practices to create a new model for New Orleans recreation.

The poll, conducted by Dr. Silas Lee, indicates that if the vote were taken today, some 55% of voters would approve the Charter change. Only 23% of voters would definitely vote against the change in NORD governance and operations.

Councilmember-at-Large Fielkow says the poll is a good sign that people are frustrated with the status quo and are ready to explore changes in NORD that would insure more effective operation, increase funding, and increase recreational opportunities for youth. "Clearly people want changes in NORD and they are ready to see a better management model and to have the private sector involved in helping to enhance services for our youth. Over the next six weeks, the Citizens Advisory Panel will conduct an aggressive educational program to gain even broader support for the Charter change effort. The City of Baton Rouge, which annually is recognized for its award winning recreational program, dramatically enhanced its recreational programs through the creation of a public-private model. We can do the same right here in New Orleans," said Fielkow.

One key finding of the poll results is the desire by 68% of the respondents to know the composition of the Commission prior to the Charter change vote on October 2nd. On the issue of the Commission's make-up, Fielkow says that he is working with Mayor Mitch Landrieu and the members of the City Council to come to an agreement on whom will serve and how they will be selected to the NORD Commission. He is committed to bringing the matter before the Council before the October 2nd election. "Voters have a right to know what change looks like and we will make sure to be inclusive and diverse in seeking fair, impartial, expert, and grassroots representation from all sectors of the community on the new NORD Commission," said Fielkow.

Entergy Corporation Chief Administrative Officer, Rod West, a Co-Chair of the Citizens Advisory Panel, says the private sector understands the importance of quality recreational services for youth. "Providing productive activities for young people is one of the key elements in reducing crime. We can do better for our kids than we've done in the past," said Mr. West.

The Lee Poll also shows a dramatic change in the outlook of New Orleans voters. Seventy-five percent (75%) of New Orleanians now say the City is moving in the "right" direction. In February, when this same question was asked, only 31% saw positive movement! It appears, based on a 70% excellent and good combined rating, Mayor Mitch Landrieu deserves considerable credit for this dramatic turn around. Mayor Landrieu is a supporter of the Charter change and has committed to substantially increasing NORD's budget as one of his first line initiatives to fight crime and give young people meaningful productive activities to pursue.

Methodology

During the week of August 2, 2010, 600 chronic voters in New Orleans were interviewed by a professional interviewing service. The purpose of the poll was to measure the attitudes and perceptions of a Charter amendment to change the New Orleans Recreation Department. The poll reflects the City's social and economic demographics and voter registration by race. The Margin of Error for the poll is + or - 3%.

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