



Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans

Let your voice be heard in rebuilding the Greater New Orleans Area


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Assessors

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Why Consolidate the Assessors?

To send the message of ongoing reform.

To ensure we are each treated fairly.

Multiple assessors continue the perception of Louisiana politics as usual. Assessor reform tells state and local politicians that they will be held accountable; that the citizens of Louisiana demand they end the political games and deliver the ongoing reforms needed to provide honest, competent, transparent and accountable government. Ongoing reform gives the President, Congress, the nation's taxpayers, and Louisiana's citizens and businesses confidence that post-Katrina we will not tolerate even the appearance of corruption and patronage politics. This confidence is vital to the public and private investment needed to rebuild our devastated community.

Tax breaks for some require increased millage rates and higher taxes for others. To invest and rebuild citizens and business must know that city services will be properly funded and that they will not be penalized by unfair taxes.

Three Reasons for Consolidation: To eliminate unfair assessments, corrupting influences, and waste.

1. Having multiple assessors causes unfair assessments.

- a. Unfair across assessor districts. Prior to Katrina, similarly situated taxpayers in different parts of the City were paying taxes at wildly different effective rates. The problems have gotten much worse since Katrina. One assessor gave some unflooded areas across-the-board cuts as high as 50% on improvements, while another gave cuts of 25%, and while another gave no reductions in unflooded areas.
- b. Unfair to new home buyers and those rebuilding homes. The current system results in significantly higher taxes for purchasers of new homes. This means citizens whose homes were severely damaged or destroyed by Katrina will pay higher taxes to subsidize long time residents whose homes were not damaged.
- c. Unfair as New Orleans rebuilds. The city faces a financial crisis. If taxes need to be raised to provide basic services, it's imperative those paying our share know the system is fair for all.

▪ **2. The current system exerts a corrupting influence on assessors and property owners alike.** It encourages property owners to seek lower assessments through negotiation and relationship building. This "cheat or be cheated" thinking creates the potential of unethical behavior in both property owners and assessors. Post Katrina, we cannot tolerate even the appearance of corruption from our political leaders.

▪ **3. Multiple assessors waste resources.** Orleans has seven assessors; every other parish in Louisiana and the largest cities in the country have one. Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and New York City have one assessor. The Orleans system is ridiculously top-heavy. The seven assessors cost Orleans parish taxpayers over \$676,000 a year for salaries and expense accounts. By contrast, the salary and expense allowance for the assessor in Jefferson Parish totals approximately \$115,000. This difference of 500% is evidence that significant resources could be redeployed to create a more efficient and properly staffed and equipped organization.

A single assessor system: The right first step towards fair assessments for all.

Our goal is to have a single assessor with the professionalism and integrity to be transparent in applying a best practice system with fair assessments for all.

Changing to a single assessor is a vital first step toward this goal. It enables the public to focus on a single administration to demand accountability for accurate and fair assessments.

Assessor Web Alerts: Why Consolidate Assessors?

We cannot reach this goal under the current system of seven assessors. We must take the first step.

Send the message of reform.

Demand fairness.

Consolidate the assessors.

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