



Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans

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



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Honorable Bobby Jindal
2008
Governor of the State of Louisiana
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

May 28,

Dear Gov. Jindal,

On behalf of residents, volunteers and visitors, we request that the Louisiana National Guard remain in New Orleans through the end of 2008.

While the New Orleans Police Department currently operates at 300 officers short of its pre-Katrina level of 1,741, it is working aggressively to rebuild its ranks. NOPD recently launched a \$1.2 million advertising campaign to recruit new officers from across the region as well as the country. The department also is working to entice LANG soldiers and seasoned officers from other departments to join the force. These men and women not only enjoy the highest pay of any police force in the state, but because they have public safety experience they are streamlined through the application process, decreasing their training time by several weeks. Furthermore, the "bleeding" of NOPD officers has ceased. The department loses approximately eight officers per month, well below the post-Katrina high of close to 20 and a pre-Katrina average of 10 per month.

These numbers show that NOPD is making progress. It will take several more months, however, for the department to recruit, vet, train and hire the hundreds of officers needed to replace the Guard, as only 1 out of 9 applicants becomes a police officer. During this recovery period, Guard patrols in the sparsely populated and especially vulnerable neighborhoods bring some peace to the pioneering homeowners and volunteers working to rebuild our cherished city. The patrols also allow NOPD to focus its ranks on the city's hotspots where rampant violence threatens to hold our recovery hostage.

If the Guard pulls out before NOPD can rebuild its ranks, the department will need to take drastic measures to provide the people of New Orleans with basic public safety. In a recent meeting, Supt. Warren Riley said NOPD will be forced to put nearly every officer on the street. Officers will be pulled from administrative roles as well as the narcotics and intelligence divisions, forcing investigations to a near halt. This scenario does not reflect a crime-fighting plan, but rather a desperate and morbid game of "Whack a Mole."

As representatives from various citizen-led organizations and neighborhood groups, we have discussed our public safety concerns with Supt. Riley, and we support his recruitment efforts.

We recognize and appreciate that the Guard's stay has been extended several times already. We ask, however, that before a decision is made regarding their departure that we meet with your office to discuss our joint efforts in greater detail. With more time, together we can rebuild a stronger, smarter and safer city.

Sincerely,

Charles Allen III, Ariane Wiltse & Jeffery Chambliss
Holy Cross Neighborhood Association

Baty Landis & Ken Foster
Silence is Violence

Ruthie Frierson & Ann Rabin
Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans
Coalition

Greg Rusovich
New Orleans Crime