



# Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans

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C. Ray Nagin  
 MAYOR FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### Mayor, State Legislators And Civic Groups Unify For Assessor Consolidation

(New Orleans, LA) Today New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin, State Representative Austin Badon (D-New Orleans), State Representative Cedric Richmond (D-New Orleans) and representatives of Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans and the Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region announced their unified support for setting November 7, 2006, as the date for the proposed Orleans Parish assessor consolidation initiative to appear on the statewide ballot.

The Louisiana House of Representatives is expected to consider this legislation (House Bill 642) on Tuesday. Senator Ann Duplessis' bill to consolidate assessors passed by an overwhelming vote in the Senate with a November 7, 2006 date. However, during a hearing by the House Ways and Means Committee, Rep. Richmond authored and the Committee passed an amendment to delay the vote until October 4, 2008. Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans, the New Orleans Business Council, and a coalition of over 20 grassroots and public interest organizations had undertaken an aggressive campaign in support of a September 30, 2006 ballot.

"I asked our legislative leaders and the civic activists to find a compromise, and I applaud them for reaching an agreement that serves the interests of all. Turnout for the November election will be high, and I'm confident the will of the people will be reflected in that vote", stated Mayor Nagin. "Assessor consolidation will benefit all citizens. It is a necessary first step to having uniform and fair assessments for all that will provide transparency and efficiency to the process resulting in stable and predictable city tax revenues," said Mayor Nagin.

"We believe the public is educated and ready to vote on this vital reform," stated Ruthie Frierson, Chairman of Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans. "We prefer the September date and are most concerned that citizens would have to wait more than two years for this critical vote."

Rep. Richmond stated he proposed to delay until 2008 to respect and ensure that all New Orleanians are given a fair chance to vote on this issue because many residents are still displaced due to damaged neighborhoods. "The November election is extremely important and will have high voter turnout which will provide a better opportunity to weigh in on an issue that deserves a true vote of the people," said Rep. Richmond.

Rep. Badon stated good government is about listening to all sides and working toward a compromise that is in the people's best interest. "Consolidating the assessors will make our City stronger and better able to serve the needs of all residents. This agreement is testament to our ability to come together as a community and give the citizens their chance to decide how best to revitalize our home," said Rep. Badon.

If amended by the House to reinstate the November 7th date, HB 642 would then have to be approved by a two-thirds majority. The measure would then go to the public for final consideration. To become part of the state constitution, the amendment needs a majority vote throughout the State and in Orleans Parish.

"Passing this bill indicates that New Orleans and Louisiana are ready to move forward.

This reform benefits all citizens and sends the signal that politics as usual is becoming a thing of the past." stated Jay Lapeyre, Chairman of the New Orleans Business Council.

For more information, please contact the Mayor's Press Office at (504) 658-4940.

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