



New Orleans *Times-Picayune*

## **EDITORIAL: Vote for Amendment 3**

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Consolidating southeast Louisiana's fractured, politicized levee board system is a vital post-Katrina reform. Better hurricane and flood protection is essential in the rebuilding of our storm-damaged region, and people deserve more efficient, accountable and professional oversight of this critical function.

Constitutional Amendment No. 3 will deliver that urgently needed reform by merging the various levee boards that now exist in metro New Orleans into two boards, one for the east bank of the Mississippi River and the other for the west.

The parishes covered by the two boards will have equal representation on the boards. Members will be chosen by the governor and subject to high professional and ethical standards. The boards, in turn, will be under the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the entity created to oversee local levee boards and set levee priorities for the state.

The present disjointed, crony-ridden system can only hamper recovery. It doesn't lend itself to regional flood-control planning, and it furthers Louisiana's reputation as a place where corruption runs rampant.

This chance at reform is on the ballot largely because state Sen. Walter Boasso and a strong, grassroots effort pressed the state Legislature to abandon the status quo. Ordinary citizens demanded that public safety be valued above politics. Now, it's important for voters statewide to get behind that effort.