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BUREAU OF GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH

225 Baronne St., Suite 610
New Orleans, LA 70112
Phone 504-525-4152
Fax 504-525-4153
research@bgr.org
www.bgr.org

BGR MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Janet R. Howard, *President & CEO*
(504) 525-4152, ext. 12

BGR Analyzes November Ballot Issues

The Bureau of Governmental Research today released *Issues on the November 2, 2004 Ballot*. The report describes, provides background information on, and analyzes the following propositions:

- Constitutional Amendment No. 2, a state constitutional amendment extending the homestead exemption to more properties than are currently eligible under a strict construction of the law.
- Constitutional Amendment No. 3, a state constitutional amendment expanding the application of a preference given to military veterans and unmarried widows of veterans when they apply for civil service positions with the State of Louisiana, the City of New Orleans, certain other local systems, or positions in the state police.
- Jefferson Parish, two propositions that would exchange one set of property tax dedications for a different set of dedications.
- New Orleans, a proposition to authorize \$260 million in bonds for public improvements.

The report also gives BGR's position on the issues:

- After discussing the arguments in favor of and against the proposed amendment to expand eligibility for the homestead exemption, BGR takes a position opposing it. Expanded coverage is a move in the wrong direction.
- BGR takes a position against the proposed expansion of the veterans' preference. The position is not based on opposition to the concept of a veterans' preference for those who participate in the military during the war on terrorism. Rather, it is based on concern that the proposed amendment is overly broad and largely unnecessary to accommodate those engaged in such war. BGR and other similar organizations have long maintained that the state's Constitution should remain as simple and clear a policy document as possible.
- With reservation, BGR takes a position for the Jefferson Parish propositions swapping tax dedications. BGR notes that the problem prompting the proposition is caused in part by an excessive dedication of revenues, and that the issue should be addressed head-on by asking voters to release dedications. The proposed solution is preferable, however, to maintaining unnecessary fund balances while other needs go unmet.
- BGR takes a position against authorizing a \$260 million bond issue for the City of New Orleans. BGR has supported the City's recent major bond issues and acknowledges the City's continuing capital needs. However, the hasty fashion in which the process has proceeded creates uncertainty as to whether scarce funds are being allocated to the highest priorities. In addition, marketing material that obscures the potential cost to the public creates concern that the public is not receiving the reliable information required to make an informed decision.

BGR's report can be found on its web site, www.bgr.org.

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BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policy-making and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information call 525-4152 or visit BGR's website.

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