



Officers

Sterling Scott Willis
Chairman

J. Kelly Duncan
Vice Chairman

Mark A. Mayer
Secretary

Hardy B. Fowler
Treasurer

Past Chairman

Hans B. Jonassen

President & CEO

Janet R. Howard

Board Members

Herschel L. Abbott, Jr.

Christian T. Brown

J. Storey Charbonnet

Edgar L. Chase III

James P. Favrot

Ludovico Feoli

Vaughan Fitzpatrick

Aimee Adatto Freeman

Julie Livaudais George

Samuel A. Giberga

Richard A. Goins

Norma Grace

Yvette Green

John C. Hope, III

Shelby P. LaSalle, Jr.

Kelly Legier

N. J. "Woody" Oge'

Nolan V. Rollins

Tiffany J. (T.J.) Thom

Ann Thorpe Thompson

Madeline D. West

Robert J. Whann, IV

Brent Wood

Alan J. Yacoubian

Luis Zervigon

Honorary Board

Harry J. Blumenthal, Jr.

Louis M. Freeman

Richard W. Freeman, Jr.

Ronald J. French

David Guidry

Paul M. Haygood

Diana M. Lewis

Anne M. Milling

R. King Milling

George H. Porter III

Lynes R. Sloss

Edward F. Stauss, Jr.

BUREAU OF GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH

938 Lafayette St., Suite 200

New Orleans, LA 70113

Phone 504-525-4152

Fax 504-525-4153

www.bgr.org

BGR MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release – April 12, 2011

Contact: Janet R. Howard, *President & CEO*
(504) 525-4152, ext. 107

BGR Reviews, Takes Positions on Four Tax Propositions in Jefferson Parish

The Bureau of Governmental Research today releases *On the Ballot: Jefferson Parish, April 30, 2011*. The report examines four tax propositions that will go before voters in Jefferson Parish on April 30. It is available on BGR's website, www.bgr.org.

The four propositions would renew, and in some cases increase, existing dedicated taxes. All four tax renewals are for 10 years. They include:

- A 3.5-mill property tax for juvenile services.
- A 2.26-mill property tax for a combination of animal shelters, human services and public health.
- A 0.5% sales tax for the Jefferson Parish Public School System.
- A 5-mill property tax for drainage.

All four taxes are levied parishwide except for the drainage tax, which excludes Grand Isle.

In the report, BGR provides background and analysis of the four propositions and takes a position on each.

Property Tax for Juvenile Services

The juvenile services tax funds the vast majority of both the juvenile services department and its facilities. The ballot proposition would renew the current 2.91 mills and increase the tax by 0.59 mills to a total rate of 3.5 mills. This would result in a minimal property tax increase for parish homeowners.

BGR Position: FOR. If the millage is not renewed, the Department of Juvenile Services will be left without a significant funding source and its work will fall to a thinly-funded state office.

Property Tax for Animal Shelters, Health Unit and Human Services

This proposition would dedicate a 2.26-mill ad valorem property tax to support the parish's Animal Shelter Department, the Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority and the Jefferson Parish Health Unit. Approval of the proposition would renew an existing 1.65 mills and increase it by .61 mills.

The tax currently provides 87% of the Animal Shelter Department budget. It also provides state mandated funding for the Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority and funding for the Parish Health Unit required by state law.

BGR Position: FOR. Failure to renew the tax will force the parish to turn to its strained general fund to meet its obligations for these services, leading to cuts in other areas.

Sales Tax for Jefferson Parish Schools

The half-cent sales tax dedicated to the Jefferson Parish Public School System generates revenue for salaries, facility maintenance, debt service, instructional materials and other purposes. Currently, the sales tax in Jefferson Parish totals 8.75%. Renewing the tax would keep the rate at that level.

BGR Position: FOR. Failure to renew this tax would hurt schools by reducing local funding and triggering a decrease in state funding.

Property Tax for Drainage

The 5-mill drainage tax funds Jefferson Parish's share of the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Program (SELA) projects, as well as other drainage projects. Approval of the ballot proposition would result in the renewal of 3.61 mills and an increase of 1.39 mills.

BGR Position: FOR. Good drainage is critical to the parish's long-term viability. The millage provides the parish with a stable source of revenue to help meet this need.

BGR Chairman Sterling Scott Willis said the propositions before voters represent investments in the future of Jefferson Parish. "Whether the purpose is to support strong juvenile services, meet state-imposed obligations, fund schools or fortify the parish against flooding, the taxes in question are important," he said. "Supporting these four propositions is a matter of common sense."

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, www.bgr.org.