

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Health Care

Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita financially devastated Louisiana's health care system, which was already struggling to provide necessary health services to its population. Before the hurricanes, Louisiana had a "two-tier" health system, with a quarter of the population below poverty and 20 percent uninsured. Health care for the poor and the uninsured was provided principally through the state-run Charity hospital system, financed by Medicaid DSH dollars. More community-based care and broadened health coverage continues to be a need.

What will you do as a federally elected representative to insure our Louisiana citizens have adequate access to health care?

Do you support H.R. 1410: Emergency Child Care for the Gulf Coast Region Act of 2007? Explain.

Public Education

Louisiana's public school system is nationally renowned for its poor quality. Educational reforms and various responses to the state's education problems have yet to raise the state's last-place standing in educational ranking throughout the United States. Dropout rates, especially in economically disadvantaged communities, continue to soar, and post-secondary education enrollment remains lagging behind other states.

What will you do to improve the quality of, and provide adequate funding for Louisiana's public schools?

Do you feel that spending should be focused upon increasing vouchers for private schools, increasing the number of chartered schools, or increasing funding for public schools? Explain.

Housing

Housing in Louisiana has always been an issue that is intimately tied to the socio-cultural climate and context. After the storm, housing prices have only increased and adequate lodging has become scarcer. Furthermore, contractor fraud has prevented many individuals, and especially the elderly, from rebuilding and living in safe structures.

Do you support S. 1668: Gulf Coast Housing Recovery Act? Explain.

What is your plan to ensure that adequate and affordable housing is available to all residents of our state?

Voting Rights

Louisiana has always stood at the forefront in the struggle for Black voting rights. Even though Blacks gained voting rights immediately following the Civil War, after Reconstruction Blacks in New Orleans lost the right to vote. Katrina displaced more than half of New Orleans' 460,000 residents, the vast majority of whom were African-American. Once again, Blacks faced the loss of the right to vote.

How do you propose to ensure that all citizens of Louisiana, including those still displaced from the 2005 hurricanes, have the means and information necessary to exercise their right to vote?

Criminal Justice

Taxpayers in Louisiana contribute millions of dollars to a public safety system that has failed every year to keep Louisiana citizens safe from crime and violence. Wealthy communities and neighborhoods pay for private protection while poor communities continue to be left in fear of not only of a lack of police protection, but also of police brutality. What is more, Louisiana residents who enter the state's criminal justice system rarely break free of the cycle of violence, crime, and incarceration.

How do you propose to improve the public safety system so that all residents are equally protected from crime and violence?

How do you propose to make the criminal justice system accountable to the citizens that it is supposed to protect and serve?

Worker Rights/Economic Development

Following the 2005 hurricanes, Louisiana's economic development continues to exclude some communities and workers from its consideration. Although every Louisiana citizen is happy to know that new businesses are commencing and growing and the state is attracting businesses, the exclusion of the concept of equality from these developments have left many workers struggling to find secure and safe jobs. Communities continue to suffer from gentrification and environmental pollution as they sacrifice their rights for economic opportunity.

Do you support the H.R. 4048: Gulf Coast Civic Works Act? Explain.

Will you work to raise the minimum threshold for income tax liability to relieve poor families of overbearing tax obligations?

Will you advocate actively for access to mainstream lending and reasonable restrictions on predatory lending and payday loan practices?