



March 22, 2007

Mr. Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.
and Paul G. Kirk, Jr.
Co-Chairmen
Commission on Presidential Debates
1200 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Box 445
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Chairmen Fahrenkopf and Kirk:

Now 18 months after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the devastating levee breaks that followed, rebuilding efforts continue across the Gulf Coast. But with thousands of residents still unable to return home, businesses still unable to reopen and schools in need of reconstruction, there is a great deal of work left to be done as our nation recovers from the first and third worst hurricane disasters in our history.

There is no doubt that the next President of the United States will bear a significant responsibility to address the ongoing and momentous challenges of this recovery. This duty is highlighted by the region's vital role in our nation's economy and national security and the statement our efforts make about how America protects and cares for its own people in times of crisis.

As such, we strongly and wholeheartedly endorse the proposal to host one of the 2008 Presidential Debates in the City of New Orleans. This would, in fact, be the Commission's first Presidential Debate held in a Gulf Coast community.

We understand an application has been filed with the Commission this week by Dillard, Loyola, Tulane and Xavier Universities and the nonprofit organization Women of the Storm. The applicants have demonstrated that the facilities at and near the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center would meet or exceed the Commission's requirements, and that the city's transportation and hospitality services and facilities are more than capable of supporting the event. We also note that New Orleans hotels have returned to more than 90 percent of their pre-Katrina capacity and that the city recently hosted a major convention of more than 30,000 attendees.

The city is clearly the most appropriate venue for a discussion of how each candidate would address the ongoing hurricane recovery needs as President. With new school and health care systems being rebuilt virtually from scratch, small businesses struggling to reopen, a devastated law enforcement community facing a growing crime epidemic, and families forced into tough choices on housing and other life-or-death

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questions, New Orleans also provides a unique forum for a discussion of broader issues in the campaign.

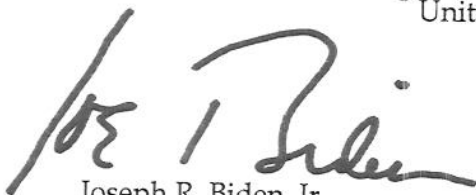
We encourage you to give the application serious consideration not only because of the unique context the city provides for a spirited debate on important issues, but also because by hosting the debate there, the Commission can itself contribute to the recovery and renewal of this vibrant region.

We thank you for your consideration of the New Orleans proposal and for the valuable service you continue to provide the American voter by sponsoring and managing the tremendously informative debate series.

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senator



Chris Dodd
United States Senator



John McCain
United States Senator



Sam Brownback
United States Senator



Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States Senator



Barack Obama
United States Senator