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Secretary of State Runoff

["Jay" Dardenne](#). [Francis C. Heitmeier](#).

"Jay" Dardenne

NAME: Jay Dardenne

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PARTY AFFILIATION: Republican

PROFESSION: Attorney

PRESENT EMPLOYER/POSITION: Kennon, Odom and Dardenne, LLC

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION: J.D., 1979 from Louisiana State University Law Center

APPLICABLE TRAINING: Attorney, community leader, state senator and Louisiana taxpayer and voter.

CIVIC EXPERIENCE: Local emcee for the Jerry Lewis Telethon; involved with the Muscular Dystrophy Association for more than 25 years, including a two-year term on its national board of directors; twice chaired the Local Organizing Committee for the National Senior Olympics held in Baton Rouge; served for three years as president of the Baton Rouge Kids Baseball Clinic; Chairman of FestForAll (1984); served as president of eight community boards including the Leadership Greater Baton Rouge Alumni, River City Festivals Association, the Cerebral Palsy Association, and the LSU Alumni Association. Named outstanding Young Man in Louisiana by the Jaycees, Outstanding Young Lawyer in Louisiana by the LSCA and Arts Advocate of the Year.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

MEMBERSHIPS: State Senator District 16 (1992 + present); served on the East Baton Rouge Parish Republican Executive Committee (1992 + 1996); East Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council (1988 + 1991); Student member of LSU Board of Supervisors (1977 + 1978). Received numerous awards for legislative leadership, including National Republican Legislator of the Year, the Lifetime Achievement Award from Victims and Citizens Against Crime, the Eagle Award from the Louisiana Association on Compulsive Gambling and a national award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for his work with school based health centers.

1. Should the Secretary of State be appointed rather than elected? Explain.

No. People should elect the chief elections officer for the state, but safeguards should be put in place that will ensure the office is free of partisan politics that can lead to unfair elections. That is why I co-authored legislation that prohibits the secretary of state from contributing to, endorsing, or working for candidates for elected office. The office of secretary of state must be overseen by a person with a proven record of

independence and integrity. I have that record and am prepared to handle the job.

2. What do you consider to be the best type of voting equipment?

Louisiana has recently invested millions of dollars in state-of-the-art voting machinery. Every parish now has computerized equipment that should serve election purposes for the foreseeable future. Because of this recent investment, my focus will not be the acquisition of new machinery, but instead will be to utilize Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds to implement complementary mechanisms to existing machinery such as the scanning of voter signatures to eliminate the potential of voter fraud due to human error. By utilizing dollars from HAVA, the state will improve current voting processes without raising taxes or spending monies that could be spent in other equally important areas.

3. What reforms would you propose for the recording of corporations to make the the information available to the public?

My top priority as secretary of state will be to modernize, simplify and streamline the processes of the office. As the "first stop" for doing business in Louisiana, the secretary of state's office, which is presently well run, should continue to take the necessary steps that will allow businesses to file most documentation online, eliminating unnecessary and time consuming trips to that office which creates a negative business environment. I recognize that technological advances are in constant change that is why a key component of my staff will be a person who is well-versed in technology and who can identify opportunities that exist to make business filings more user-friendly. This is a critical first step in the state's efforts to improve economic development.

4. What permanent changes to the voter registration procedure or the election process would you recommend to the legislature?

I will aggressively implement a pilot program to allow for early voting at highly trafficked locations in Louisiana communities. I will propose the shortening of Election Day hours, while expanding the early voting period so that voters can participate at their convenience rather than the convenience of the state.

I will develop a plan to recruit new voting commissioners. Our commissioners are a very dedicated group of mostly older Louisianans who soon will have to be replaced with a new generation of public servants.

I will recommend requiring all parishes to scan voter registration information to ensure that absentee voting is free from voter fraud due to human error.

With voter participation at an all time low, I will focus on strategies to revitalize the American spirit of voting. I will have a strong, personal presence in high schools throughout the state to promote bipartisan voter registration of young people. I will support distributing voter registration forms with high school diplomas and mailing birthday/voter registration cards to 18-year olds.



Francis C. Heitmeier

NAME: Francis C. Heitmeier

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PARTY AFFILIATION: Democrat

PROFESSION: Retired after 30 years with Fortune 500 company.

PRESENT EMPLOYER/POSITION (if self-employed, what type of business) Started own insurance agency with wife in Algiers.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION (include graduation date): 1972 Nicholls State University Thibodaux, LA

APPLICABLE TRAINING: Started at entry level position at BellSouth and rose to Manager in Public Affairs.

CIVIC EXPERIENCE: Greater New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission; Little Sisters of the Poor Boardmember; Knights of Columbus; Algiers Jaycees

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

MEMBERSHIPS: Currently serving as Senator District 7, representing Algiers, West Jefferson, ---, and Plaquemines; Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee; State Representative District 102 1984 - 1992; Commerce and Consumer Protection; Legislative Budgetary Control Council.

1. Should the Secretary of State be appointed rather than elected? Explain.

The Secretary of State should remain elected so that he/she would be directly responsible to the people of Louisiana. The Secretary of State has many duties but perhaps the most important is that of Chief Elections Official. The person administrating elections should be elected by the people. A new law which prohibits the Secretary of State from endorsing candidates is a good one.

2. What do you consider to be the best type of voting equipment?

The electronic voting machines, which the state has used since 1991 in much of the state has been secured for all parishes just this year. Most poll commissioners I spoke to like the new machines. The ballot has large print and is wheelchair accessible, but perhaps most importantly it has an internal tape back up which is a "check and balance" on our elections. In the future, we must look into new technology that will enhance our citizens voting experience.

Voting real time, in a satellite system, which is bringing the voting booth to the public, is something we must seriously consider.

3. What reforms would you propose for the recording of corporations to make the information available to the public?

The recordation of businesses and the concurrent database can be enhanced by the ever improving technology of the World Wide Web. I would look into improvements on every level but one thing I hear from citizens is that they would like to file and pay electronically.

4. What permanent changes to the voter registration procedure or the election process would you recommend to the legislature?

The election process and/or the voter registration procedure must be constantly studied to take advantage of new technology, the people's needs and what should promote our democratic process. I would like to streamline the number of elections to be more efficient to save money for Louisiana taxpayers. I also support the National League of Women Voters founding principal that every citizen has a right to vote.

Comments, suggestions, questions? Contact our [webmaster](#). Last revised: October 6, 2006 07:43 PDT.

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