
From: Mandi Mitchell <mandi@lafayette.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2022 8:40 AM
To: Stefanski, Rep. John (District Office); Hewitt, Sen. Sharon (District Office)
Cc: s&ga@legis.la.gov; House & Governmental Affairs; Dixon, Yolanda; Fontenot, Michelle; Lowrey, Patricia
Subject: Redistricting: Position Statement on Congressional District 3
Attachments: MDM Position Statement - Congressional District 3[1].pdf

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Dear Chairman Stefanski and Chairwoman Hewitt:

I hope this message finds you well, safe, and healthy. I am submitting, for the record and for your files, my position statement on (and request for) maintaining the current boundaries and make-up of Louisiana's 3rd Congressional District.

Thank you for all that you have done to ensure that Louisiana's citizenry have had ample opportunities to engage in the redistricting process. I pray that your Special Session on Redistricting will be successful.

Sincerely,



Mandi D. Mitchell
President & CEO
Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA)
211 E. Devalcourt Street, Lafayette, LA 70506
337.593.1400
lafayette.org | facebook.com/lafayettela | @LEDALafayetteLA

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January 18, 2022

Position Statement for Maintaining Congressional District 3 in 2022 Redistricting

During reapportionment and redistricting in 2011, the Acadiana and Southwest Louisiana regions came together to successfully voice the importance of remaining a unified Congressional district. As the Louisiana Legislature approaches the 2022 Special Session on Redistricting, I would like to formally articulate the value of keeping Congressional District 3 intact. Preserving the current boundaries of Congressional District 3 is even more important as Southwest Louisiana continues its recovery from the 2020 hurricane season and the entire state adjusts to the long-term impacts and systemic economic changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 3rd Congressional District shares a long history of a common culture that is linked by similar economies, communities of interest and geographic concerns. The District honors those areas of similar interest by including Lake Charles and Lafayette as the two urban areas anchoring either end of the District. The economic corridors of Interstate 10, Interstate 49, and U.S. Hwy. 90 link the cultures, transportation hubs, educational institutions, economic development partnerships, and business activities in south Louisiana. The two regions are stronger together— combining common industries, workforce, infrastructure, and pro-business policies to compete globally.

Areas of common interests include:

- Cajun and Creole culture and heritage and a focus on outdoor/recreational activities
- Industries and business base: energy, agriculture, tourism, transportation, and logistics
- Shared professional and skilled labor force between the Lafayette and Lake Charles MSAs and points in between along Interstate 10
- Geographic positioning along Interstate 10
- Closely aligned higher education systems anchored by the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and McNeese State University
- Shared natural resources and geographic concerns: coastal erosion, environmental protection, and hurricane threats

For example, Lafayette Parish serves as an energy production and services hub and Calcasieu Parish is the center of petrochemical refining in southwest Louisiana. Both sectors of the industry have flourished because of shared research and development, industry knowledge and resources, and our professional and skilled talent pool. As construction ramped up on multiple LNG facilities in Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes, LEDA and our Lake Charles partners came together to provide employment opportunities and business opportunities across the region. Community partners from Lake Charles to Lafayette hosted the 2016 Industrial Trades Career

211 EAST DEVALCOURT ST.
LAFAYETTE, LA 70506 USA
PHONE 337.593.1400
FAX 337.254.3009
1.800.810.7771
www.lafayette.org

Fair to address workforce needs in south Louisiana following job reductions by oil & gas, construction, and manufacturing companies in 2015. Several of the contractors constructing the facilities participated in the event— nearly 1,800 job seekers attended the event. LEDA and the Cameron Parish Police Jury also hosted two business seminars to share vendor/contractor opportunities available during the construction phase of the LNG facilities. Both events are examples of how working as a singular region benefits the entire Congressional District.

As President and CEO of the Lafayette Economic Development Authority, I respectfully request of the Louisiana Legislature that any reapportionment of the Congressional Districts should recognize the traditional boundaries of the 3rd Congressional District and make as few changes as possible in the current district. The district boundaries should continue to include the traditional areas of similar interests that are present within Acadiana and Southwest Louisiana and the parishes comprising this super region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mandi D. Mitchell".

Mandi D. Mitchell
President and CEO