

LATOYA CANTRELL, MAYOR
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

April 26, 2022

Dear City Councilmembers,

Our City is still recovering financially and spiritually from the pandemic, and rapidly approaching hurricane season. The time calls for governance, working together, and staying focused on moving forward.

I am deeply concerned by the disturbing rhetoric coming from some elements of the Council, in their efforts to obstruct my administration. In the last few weeks alone: \$71.7M in capital outlay funds have been jeopardized at the state level, and we lost out on \$50M for citywide WiFi from outside investors.

That's a loss for our people. If you live in District A, about 90% of your neighbors have internet access. If you live in District E, that number is barely 50%.

The story here is that disadvantaged kids in the East are losing out — children who went through the pandemic and distance learning, students who are subject to “digital redline” and losing progress. Those kids need help. That is why we were pursuing the Smart Cities initiative.

This obstructive climate is far too similar to what we have seen at the federal level. It's negative and divisive at a time when our people are already traumatized by four years of that kind of ugliness and dysfunction in Washington. Our City can do better than that - we have to. Recent actions have created partisan division, turning the state legislature against our City for a Republican-backed bill regarding our Sewerage and Water Board, while leaving members of our own delegation in the dark.

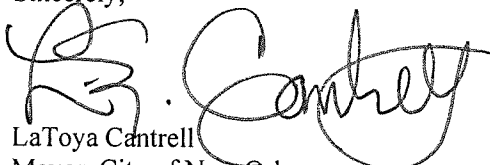
Some of you are asking voters to decide if we should turn mayoral appointments into Washington DC-style gridlock, despite the Council already having the power to fire appointees. That's badly damaging to the morale of my team --- which has carried this City through three and a half years of overlapping crises. From the cyber attacks, to the Hard Rock disaster, through multiple storm and hurricane events, and then through a global pandemic that killed over 1,000 of our people, this team has held it together and delivered results for our residents. The barbed rhetoric being turned on them now is disrespectful, it is hurtful, and it is counter-productive.

What's more: this kind of attack, and the spectacle of hearings it brings with it, is sending the wrong message to the people we are trying to attract to work for this City. It cripples our ability to replenish a depleted workforce. The mission before us is to manage through a trifecta of systemic challenges created by the pandemic: nationwide inflation, the Great Resignation, and supply chain failures. Making matters more difficult, on top of all that, hurts our ability to deliver for the people we serve.

Now, rather than ask for our voluntary cooperation, the Council seeks to subpoena and parade out a series of public servants under an investigation. The Council's investigatory authority is limited by the City Charter and we will not allow them to exceed their authority or abuse their power.

Enough of this divide. We are here because those kids in the East still don't have internet. The problem still is not solved. The people of New Orleans elected us to serve this City and to work together to solve problems. We absolutely need a strong council, and that means one which works with our administration and our legislative delegation, hand-in-hand, to deliver results for the people of New Orleans.

Sincerely,


LaToya Cantrell
Mayor, City of New Orleans

1300 PERDIDO STREET | SUITE 2E04 | NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA | 70112
PHONE 504.658.4900 | FAX 504.658.4938 | WWW.NOLA.GOV

