

BRAC Releases Positions on East Baton Rouge Ballot Referendums for November 18 Election

With the start of early voting today, BRAC released its position on one of five ballot referendums that will go before the voters in East Baton Rouge Parish on November 18. The organization's Board of Directors has considered the economic development impact of the propositions and voted to support the proposition described below.

Proposed Ballot Proposition Tourism Infrastructure Proposal

 **BRAC Recommendation: Yes**

Voters residing in areas outside of Baker, Central, Zachary, and the newly formed North Baton Rouge Economic Development District are being asked to authorize the levy and collection of an additional 2 percent occupancy tax on the rental of hotel rooms, which would raise about \$2.6 million annually, with the proceeds evenly split between the Raising Cane's River Center and Visit Baton Rouge.

The Raising Cane's River Center will reportedly use the revenue for long overdue upgrades to its arena and ballroom. With improvements made to the facility, Baton Rouge will be in a more competitive position to attract additional visitor-related events. Visit Baton Rouge will use funds for marketing purposes — to increase visitors and business travel to the city that will generate positive economic impact on East Baton Rouge Parish.

The plans outlined by officials with the River Center and Visit Baton Rouge align with BRAC's strategic goal of elevating the region's external image.