



MICHAEL S. YENNI

Mayor

CITY OF KENNER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAYOR YENNI STRENGTHENS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DIVERSION PROGRAM BEYOND STATE REGULATIONS

Kenner, LA. – Kenner Mayor Mike Yenni today announced that beginning March 1st he will institute a policy that will strengthen the city’s Domestic Violence Diversion Program beyond the state law minimum provisions for counseling.

Yenni’s new policy will now require a minimum of 26 sessions of counseling for domestic violence offenders, and the counseling providers must now include licensed medical health professionals, such as clinical social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists, which exceeds current state guidelines. Yenni believes the diversion program will benefit from counselors who must maintain continuing education in their respective fields as well as adhere to strict ethical rules.

State Rep. Helena Moreno, D-New Orleans, who authored the legislation to raise the minimum standard for counseling of domestic violence offenders to 26 weeks, noted, “Mayor Yenni should be commended for his concern for domestic violence victims. He acted quickly and responsibly, and will raise the bar for other city courts on this important issue.”

On a related matter, the Mayor and city officials received a draft of an opinion from the Louisiana Board of Ethics, requested in December, which concludes that state law does not allow a prosecutor in the Kenner City Court to also participate in the diversion program that is supervised and controlled by the city.

Said Yenni, “I agree with the draft opinion issued by the Board of Ethics. When I learned that a prosecutor in the Kenner city attorney’s office was also providing counseling services to domestic violence offenders, I immediately suspended that practice and relied on an Ethics Board opinion to validate my own concerns. I am pleased that this matter was called to my attention by the media. It educated me on the best ways to improve the program on behalf of the victims. Kenner was one of the first local courts in the metropolitan area to focus on domestic violence. These changes will better treat domestic violence defendants to help them improve their behavioral skills and eliminate the use of violence.”

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