

WEDNESDAY

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Gertler Lauds DA But Won't Back Anyone

Mayoral candidate David Gertler today said he will not endorse a candidate for the office of district attorney. However, Gertler praised incumbent DA Jim Garrison.

In announcing his decision not to endorse a candidate, Gertler said, "The present district attorney has established a new and very healthy tradition of independence in the DA's office. To break with that tradition (by endorsing a DA candidate) would be to give in too quickly to those long-established forces that have controlled New Orleans."

GARRISON IS opposed in the Nov. 8 Democratic primary by Harry Connick, Charles Ray Ward and Ross T. Saccia. Two mayoral candidates, John J. Petre and Moon Landrieu, have endorsed Connick.

In his statement, Gertler said, "It is unfortunate that the vested interests who control one of our most important media, and who have already endorsed a candidate for district attorney, now seek to force mayoral candidates to break with that important tradition of independence and to make this race political in support of their chosen man."

GERTLER SAID he has concluded that "at this time, and in this election, the best interests of the city are served by not endorsing a candidate. My reasons are many.

"But the most important consideration is the under our charter and the laws of Louisiana, the mayor and DA have the effect of 'checks and balances' that was the intent of the Constitution of our country.

"For example, the mayor is responsible for the operation of the police department while the DA has the authority and the obligation to investigate and prosecute that department when necessary.

"IN FACT, the DA has the authority to investigate the office of mayor and other city departments. These are important functions, and the offices, both of which are strong ones, tend to balance each other in the public interest.

"I feel that to endorse, especially at this time when many seek to break the independence of the mayor and DA, and to use the candidacy for the office of the DA for purely political expediency is not in the best interest of the city."