



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2009

Young Democrats Dismayed by Outcome of Racially Charged YRNF Election

RALPH JOHNSON

President

Jefferson Parish

CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER

Executive Vice President

East Baton Rouge Parish

KATRINA L. ROGERS

National Committeewoman

Caddo Parish

JASON W. HUGHES

National Committeeman

Orleans Parish

LYNNAL BERING

Vice President of Political Affairs

St. John the Baptist Parish

LAURA VEAZEY

Vice President of Finance

Plaquemines Parish

BRETT JACKSON

Vice President of Administration

East Baton Rouge Parish

THEO RICHARD

Vice President of Membership

East Baton Rouge Parish

VINCENT TROMBATORE

Vice President of Programs

Lafayette Parish

JERMAINE WATSON

Vice President of Communications

East Baton Rouge Parish

JAMAL BATES

High School Liaison

St. Tammany Parish

Baton Rouge, LA – The Young Democrats of Louisiana (YDL) expresses its disappointment by the election of Audra Shay of Louisiana to the chairmanship of Young Republicans National Federation, saying that such a stance on the issue of race in America today only derides the advances made in the many generations since Jim Crow. Ms. Shay, supported by Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, lauded a comment posted on her Facebook profile which referred to President Obama as a “mad coon.” The initial comment was made by Eric S Piker, a friend of Shays’, in response to a status update by the National Vice-Chair at Large. She responded to a comment made by a friend on Facebook saying “need to take this country back from all of these mad coons” with “You tell em Eric! lol.” Shay claimed she was “not aware of the racial comments” at the time she posted her response, yet her actions seem to belie her words. Two other friends of Shay, including the Chairman of the DC Young Republicans, then posted condemnations of the racial slur on her wall, whereupon Shay immediately “un-friended” them.

“Louisiana is a proud state with rich culture and great hospitality to match that pride. It is not a state that openly tolerates such incivility of character that threatens to divide,” said Ralph Johnson, YDL’s President. “Any leader who represents Louisiana should not only know its history but the importance of cooperation, understanding, and eschew any inkling of negative behavior that advances hatred and bigotry.”

YDL is encouraged, however, that nearly half of the Young Republicans that attended the national convention in Indianapolis choose to support Ms. Shay’s opponent. It should signal to all of America that we are ready to move beyond the politics of hatred and move toward inclusivity.

Though displeased with some of Ms. Shay’s antics, YDL applauds Ms. Shay for issuing an apology and vowing to attend diversity training. President Johnson stated “I commend Audra for agreeing to take diversity training and I know deep down that she is not that person that has been portrayed in this ordeal. If she would like, I would be happy to go through the training with her because we all need it. Both parties must realize that our country operates much better when we work together towards common goals instead of focusing on and discriminating against the things that make us different.”

####

About the Young Democrats of Louisiana

YDL is a member unit of Young Democrats of America. YDA is the largest youth-led partisan political organization that builds strong chapters and a solid youth voting bloc for Democrats nationwide. As the official youth arm of the Democratic Party, YDA mobilizes young people under the age of 36 to participate in the electoral process, influence the ideals of the Democratic Party and develop the skills of the youth generation to serve as leaders at the local and national level. YDL was originally founded in 1934.

CONTACT:

Jermaine Watson vpcomm@ydlouisiana.org or Ralph Johnson president@ydlouisiana.org
701 Government Street Baton Rouge, LA 70802
225.802.7321