

Art LeBreton / *Statement of Campaign Suspension*

In December 2022, my wife and I decided to make her hometown of Youngsville our hometown together. Many of our family members were already established residents of Youngsville, and our school-age children were already enrolled in a local charter school. We placed our existing home for sale in February 2023 and purchased a residential lot in Youngsville in April 2023 with the intent to build. Unfortunately, the real estate market was at an all-time low, and mortgage interest rates were at an all-time high, yet we were undeterred in pursuing this dream together.

As a former public servant with over thirty years of experience with the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office, I once again felt a calling to contribute to my future community. This led me to consider bringing my leadership experience to the City of Youngsville Police Department as their future Police Chief. The next regular election was scheduled for 2026 for a term beginning in January 2027, so I had plenty of time.

However, when the elected Chief of Police unexpectedly resigned in August 2023, time was no longer on my side. Even though my home outside of Youngsville had yet to sell, I boldly decided to rent an apartment in Youngsville and offer my service to its citizens. This decision was made after countless people urged me to enter the race for Police Chief.

Through research and consultation with other respected local officials, I believed that the law and the court would recognize that my intent was clearly established before the former Chief's unforeseeable resignation and my interest in public safety was genuine. This was not a last-minute decision to capitalize on a vacancy within the Office of the Chief of Police.

As news of my future campaign spread, the encouragement and support I received were humbling. I have had the pleasure of meeting many community members, public leaders, civic organizations, and volunteer groups—many of whom I now consider friends! I enjoyed sharing my experience, vision for the future, and leadership style with so many and felt momentum growing.

A few wise men, with my best interest at heart, questioned my ability to qualify for the election. Even though I assured them that prior case law was in my favor, they suggested an Attorney General's opinion regarding my ability to qualify as a candidate for Chief of Police. Though I had doubts because an AG opinion is not binding like a judgment from a court of law, I felt the need to honor their request.

As the Attorney General requires a sitting public official to submit a request for opinion, I sought the help of Louis Perret, the qualifying official for local races, to formally submit the request on my behalf. Unfortunately, the opinion does not support my candidacy. Although many factors contributed, including the preliminary work to qualify this election cycle and the unanticipated special election resulting from the prior incumbent's resignation, I feel the need to honor and respect the opinion I sought.

Out of respect for the law and my supporters, I have decided to suspend my current campaign with an eye to the future. I will continue participating in and contributing to my community and will reevaluate my candidacy for the regular election in late 2026.