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## Governor Jindal Announces Accomplishments of Ethics Reform Special Session

BATON ROUGE - Today, Governor Bobby Jindal announced the historic accomplishments of the ethics reform special session, highlighting key legislative achievements – including ending conflicts of interest, dramatically increasing transparency at every level of government, requiring disclosure for lobbyists, closing the loophole that allows free tickets and ending the practice of elected officials receiving unlimited meals from lobbyists.



*Governor Jindal, surrounded by legislators, addresses the media regarding the success of the ethics reform special session.*

Jindal said, “This is not just another day in the State Capitol. Today is an historic day for the state of Louisiana. We have

promised an end to corruption and incompetence in state government. Make no mistake about it – This is a massive first step.

“We all won an election last fall – it was an election with a very clear message – change our state, reform our state, and start with ethics reform. This legislature has passed the most comprehensive set of ethics reforms in our lifetime, perhaps in the history of the state of Louisiana.

“When I started running for Governor, people told me I was terribly naïve to think that any comprehensive ethics reform could ever be passed in Baton Rouge. They said it couldn’t be done. Well, the people have spoken, they have demanded change, and today, we are taking a huge step toward a New Louisiana where our children do not have to leave the state to pursue their dreams.

“Ethics Reform won’t magically change our state overnight. But it does send a very powerful signal to all our citizens, and to people all over the country. Louisiana means business, Louisiana is on the rise. Today is a great day to be a Louisianian.”

### **Highlights of Ethics Reform Special Session Victories for Louisiana**

**HB1: Enacts personal financial disclosures for the vast majority of elected and appointed officials in state and local government for the first time in Louisiana’s history.**

The adoption of HB1 will spark national attention and bring Louisiana to the Top Five in the country for transparency in government.

With this new law in place, Louisiana could jump ahead of Washington State as #1 in the nation for gubernatorial disclosure and will likely rank among the Top Five states in the country for legislative financial disclosure.

**SB1: Prohibits contracts between state government and legislators and executive branch leaders – forcing officials to choose to work for themselves or the people of Louisiana, but not being able to do both.**

Legislators, executive branch department heads, their spouses, and businesses will no longer be allowed to enter into contracts with the state that are authorized or renewed during their term of office and for one year thereafter.

Negotiated contracts between the state and the adult children, siblings and parents of legislators, executive branch department heads, the governor’s senior staff, and their spouses will also be prohibited, unless awarded through a competitive process.

Statewide elected officials, the governor’s senior staff, legislators, their spouses, and businesses will be further prohibited from receiving recovery-related contracts during their term of office and for one year thereafter.

With these measures, Louisiana will be going further than almost any state in the country—setting the “gold standard” to eliminate conflicts of interest in government.

The provision relating to federal recovery dollars, in particular, shows the state’s commitment to accountability and makes a strong case as we look to Washington and our neighbors around the country to continue assisting in Louisiana’s recovery.

**SB11: Significantly enhances transparency in lobbyist activities.**

Lobbyists’ registration forms will now include compensation ranges, subject matter of lobbying activity, and business relationships with statewide elected officials, executive department heads, legislators, and their spouses.

Lobbyists will report their spending on public officials, including their spouses and dependent children.

Lobbyist reports will occur monthly, and all documents will be filed electronically and posted in an online, search-able database.

With these reforms, Louisiana will rank among the Top Ten nationally in lobbyist transparency.

**SB3: Eliminates loophole for free cultural and sporting event tickets for elected officials.**

Free tickets for elected officials to attend professional and collegiate sporting events, hunting and fishing trips, and golf outings will no longer be allowed.

**SB8: Caps food and beverages for public servants at \$50 – eliminating the unlimited wining and dining by lobbyists and special interests.**

In the past, Louisiana allowed unlimited spending on food and beverage for public officials and employees by lobbyists and those seeking contracts with the state.

With this new law, these individuals will be limited to spending a maximum of \$50 per occasion on public servants.

**SB5: Requires the recusal of elected officials who have a conflict of interest.**

By repealing an exception in the existing ethics code, this new law ensures that—under no circumstances—will an elected official vote where a conflict is present.

**HB6: Requires annual ethics training for all public servants and lobbyists.**

This law will phase in mandatory training each year for all those governed by the ethics code to promote awareness and compliance with new and existing laws.

**HB29: Requires training and qualifications for ethics board members.**

This bill requires the presence of three lawyers on the ethics board to provide a resource to the other eight members.

Mandatory training for board members will serve as an in-depth introduction to the rules they have the responsibility to enforce.

**HB41: Provides greater separation between the Ethics Board's advisory, investigatory, and prosecutorial functions.**

Beginning this summer, independent administrative law judges will be selected at random by the ethics board to preside over hearings and rule on charges and penalties.

This new law will provide a neutral forum where the ethics board can prosecute cases, while an independent administrative law judge will help make the finding and assess the penalty.

**SB37: Requires online reports of all state spending by agency and function.**

This new law requires the Commissioner of Administration to post a monthly report of the appropriations and spending for each budget unit of state government.

The website will be user-friendly and fully functional in January 2009.

**SB35: Prohibits attempts to circumvent the ethics code.**

New and existing ethics laws cannot be circumvented with the transfer of assets, counter letters, or other measures.

**HB56: Creates the Office of Inspector General in statute.**

This legislation formalizes and makes permanent the mission of this office, strengthening the means to fight against waste, inefficiency, fraud, and abuse in state government.

**HB80: Authorizes the issuance of subpoenas by local inspector generals and local ethics entities.**

This new law lends the full support of the state in the efforts of local government to tackle waste and fraud.

**HB8: Expands whistleblower protection.**

With the adoption of HB8, no threat against a public employee who reports wrongdoing within state government will be tolerated.

**SB29: Requires disclosure by Section 527 political groups.**

The public and candidates will now have a clear understanding of all contributors, contributions, and expenditures made to 527 groups conducting political activities.

**SB14: Requires the disclosure of third-party political advertisements.**

This law lets the public know who is attempting to influence their opinion and their vote.

The group sponsoring the advertisement will disclose their full name and contact information and will explicitly state whether a candidate authorized the ad.

**HB65: Prohibits candidates with outstanding ethics fines from qualifying as a candidate for elected office.**

With the adoption of HB65, those who violate ethics laws and are in default will no longer be able to run for elected office until those fines are paid.

**HB7: Establishes a \$10,000 limit for contributions to gubernatorial transition teams.**

The voluntary limit imposed by the transitions of both Governor Jindal and former Governor Blanco will now be solidified in statute.

**HR1: Requires the House to broadcast proceedings.**

With this rule in place, all audio and video of House deliberations in committee rooms and the floor will be broadcast live via the Internet and archived for at least three years.

**HR2: Requires non-governmental entities receiving state funds to file a supplemental information form for all appropriations requests in the House.**

This rule puts important information in the hands of the taxpayer.

These forms, filed prior to a vote, will show the dollar amount, the name of the legislator offering the amendment, and the organization's name, budget, directors, and ties to elected and appointed officials.

**HR3: Prohibits legislators, through House rules, from changing their vote.**

This rule provides that a motion to change a legislator's vote is debatable and must be requested and granted on the same legislative day that the vote was cast.