

Press Release

Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus
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For Immediate Release

Baton Rouge. Today, November 9, 2005, the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus filed a Petition for Declaratory Judgment against Kathleen B. Blanco in her official capacity as Governor of the State of Louisiana. The suit declares that the Governor's unilateral actions in dealing with the State's projected budget deficit circumvent the legislative process, and that she acted beyond her authority in cutting 10% from the state's budget without legislative approval. The executive, legislative and judicial branches are co-equal branches of government that relies on a set of checks and balances. There is no branch with greater authority than the other; however, the suit urges that the state's top executive official overstepped her authority in making budget cuts by not observing the statutory authority of the legislative branch's oversight function in this instance. The Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus understands the importance of balancing the state's budget, but does not believe that the process by which these cuts were effectuated by the Governor followed the letter of the law. This is not a political suit. The electorate in this state deserves freedom from unilateral action without granted authority, and we believe that this type of action opens the floodgate to fiscal tyranny. It is our position and responsibility to protect the public trust by enforcing the public's rights in a court of law.

Additionally, the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus has made a formal request from FEMA to release information regarding the whereabouts of approximately 525,000 displaced Louisiana residents. FEMA has refused such requests from the state's top election official, Secretary of State Al Ater; however today the LLBC made a formal demand to FEMA requesting mailing information on Louisiana's

displaced citizens. The caucus urges that several hundred thousand Louisiana citizens were spread across the country with limited resources, and are now in effect cut-off from their own state. Many of the LLBC member-legislators now have no way to contact their constituents, or in some cases their own family members. The LLBC is prepared to file suit on this matter as well if the information requested is not provided in a timely manner.

Lastly, the LLBC has proposed a set of budget cuts that are less painful than the proposal set forth by the Governor and her administration. These are challenging fiscal times; however the LLBC believes that this administration should not attempt to save money by balancing the state's budget shortfall on the backs of poor people. Many of the administration's cuts are in areas such as healthcare and education, and we believe that there are viable alternatives to balancing the budget that do not require such dramatic measures.