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Governor Jindal's Pay to Play Campaign Favors -OR - His Gender and Racial Discriminatory Beliefs

On November 17, 2010, a public Legislative committee meeting was held to address a study requested by Representative Regina Ashford Barrow in House Concurrent Study Resolution passed in the 2010 Regular Session. During this meeting Jonathan Ringo, special assistant to Governor Jindal and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, told Louisiana legislators, when asked about his lack of gender and racial-based inclusions in appointments to Louisiana Boards and Commissions, that the governor seeks individuals who believe in his agenda and also that whether individuals contribute to his campaign often plays a role in the appointment. *"Louisiana Legislature Joint Committee on Governmental Affairs."* Louisiana House of Representatives. Web. 22 Dec 2010. <http://house.louisiana.gov/h_video/2010/nov2010.htm>. If Mr. Ringo's statement is true then this self-serving practice of making appointments if an individual is a campaign contributor is unethical and does not exactly align with the governor's observation made during his Inaugural address where he stated,

"You have often heard me say that we do not have a poor state, but a state with poor leadership. That we do not have a state stuck in the past, but leaders who were unconcerned with the future.....In our past, too many politicians looked out for themselves. Too many arms of the state and local government did not get results. And the world took note." Jindal, Bobby. "Governor Jindal's Inauguration Address." 2008 State of Louisiana Governor's Inauguration. State of Louisiana. Louisiana State Capitol Steps, Baton Rouge. Address. 01/14/2008.

Perhaps Governor Jindal should be informed that making appointments to the state's boards and commissions based on whether or not a person contributes to his campaign fund is, without question, looking out for himself and advancing his personal political gain on the backs of Louisiana's citizens.

As it stands, Governor Jindal is now changing his tune with a recent interview with The Advocate as he stated, "We look to find the most qualified people with experience...the best qualified people who want to serve our state." *Shuler, Marsha. "Lawmakers blast Jindal on diversity." Advocate December 22, 2010: 10A. Print.* If this is his new position, then Governor Jindal's actions demonstrate is inability to embrace the rich diversity of the citizens of Louisiana.

One of the many examples of this newly announced position is his recent appointments to the Board of Regents. Governor Jindal ignored a long-standing Louisiana law directing the governor to appoint these members based on the state's race and gender population. *La. R.S. 42:2.1* Governor Jindal appointed five (5) white males to the Board of Regents and three (3) white males to the University of Louisiana Board of Supervisors. Seven (7) of these eight (8) appointees are campaign contributors replacing women and minorities who previously filled these positions.

The new appointees include a wingery restaurant owner; insurance agency owner, a Central Telephone Company founder, a pharmacist, a vice president of a construction company; an attorney who is his former executive council; a vice president of a trucking transport company, and a co-owner of an insurance company. None of these appointees have any qualifications in the area of educational governance with the exception of one. In contrast, Louisiana has numerous women and minority candidates who are all well-qualified in the area of education and higher education management. A number of these potential candidates have served as president of various colleges and universities and some are well-published professors and teachers. Thus, it cannot hold true that the governor could not find women and minorities who are more qualified than those white males he actually appointed. Essentially, what Governor Jindal has painstakingly demonstrated is **his belief that, in Louisiana, women as well as African-Americans, Hispanics, Indians, Native Americans, or any other minorities, are not qualified for appointments to serve our state** and that this state is not worthy of the diversified voice and wisdom that our citizens can offer.

Nonetheless, neither of the governor's stated practices for appointments to

boards and commissions can hardly be considered honorable. There has to come a time when leadership acknowledges and invites the talent and intelligence of all our citizens, not simply those who have the financial means to make contributions to support him.

This is especially disturbing considering that Governor Jindal is a minority himself.

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