# LOUISIANA REPUBLICAN LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

BATON ROUGE - The Republican Delegation, along with members of the Rebuild Louisiana Right Coalition outlined our legislative package for the 1st Extraordinary Legislative Session of 2005 on October 20th , ten days prior to Governor Blanco issuing her session call.  The letter included 27 critical items we believed needed to be addressed during the session. The Governor saw fit to include 17 of those items when she issued her call for the session.

It was our initiative which set the agenda for the successes in this session.  We provoked the budget debate. From there the Governor subsequently went on to issue executive-ordered budget cuts and propose legislation which mimicked items that we first outlined in our package.

Of the 17 items on our agenda included in the call, many have passed and await the Governor's signature.  They include but not limited to the following:

- We have eliminated the $976 million shortfall from this year's budget by cutting waste and unnecessary expenditures from the budget and prudent use of the rainy day fund.

- We successfully defended the Budget Stabilization Fund from being raided by gluttonous legislators.

- We refused to  raise taxes, deficit spend or borrow our way out of these problems.

- We supported efforts to rewrite the State tax code to protect individuals from higher taxes due to hurricane casualty losses which can be deducted on federal taxes, but not on state taxes.

- We pressed for business incentives to encourage the Louisiana business community to rebuild, thus creating jobs including:
  - Provide tax relief for manufacturing, machinery and equipment purchased to replace certain hurricane-damaged equipment (HB 39)*
  - Provide corporate franchise tax relief for hurricane-impacted companies (HB 41)*
  - Provide relief to business for the rising cost of natural gas and electricity (HB 40)*

- We led the efforts to create a statewide building code across Louisiana.

- We supported the State take-over of the Orleans Parish School System and creation of a recovery district (HB 121)*.

- We worked with the BESE to adjust the Minimum Foundation Formula (MFP) (SCR 125).

- Led by Republican amendments in both houses, the administration's ethics bill is now substance over form.  Unquestionably, we strengthened a showy bill.

- We protected the democratic system by opposing potentially fraudulent absentee voting legislation,  which would have undermined the integrity of the election system.

- Resolutions were passed to begin the Constitutional process of evaluating both the health care delivery systems and the higher education systems for efficiencies going forward.

- **Our only real loss came on levee reform. The Delegation and Coalition overwhelmingly supported Senator Boasso's SB 95 to address levee board reform. This Republican-led bill was an essential piece of legislation that failed because of a lack of political leadership from the Governor.  SB 95 had the backing of the business community and Mayor Ray Nagin's Bring New Orleans Back Commission and ordinary people across this state.  We call on the Governor to include this bill in the January special session call as item number one.**

During the session the Coalition was effective and our efforts have paid off. The Coalition realizes that there is still much work to be done in the sessions ahead-- we will continue to work diligently for the people of Louisiana and will not stop until we are satisfied that we will **REBUILD *LOUISIANA* RIGHT**!

*(These are administration bills, but our package offered similar and often lower numbered duplicate bills.)