

Governor Jindal Just Pay the Fine

Posted by [jcrouere](#) February 08, 2008 13:14PM

February 8, 2008...Governor Bobby Jindal has only been in office a few weeks, but he has encountered more criticism since his inauguration than at any other time in his young political career. Most of the recent criticism centers on the ethics violation that resulted when an \$118,000 in-kind donation by the Louisiana Republican Party was not reported by his campaign in a timely manner. This is an embarrassing revelation since Jindal is getting ready to embark on a special legislative session dedicated to creating a "gold standard" for ethics in our state.

A Democrat activist reported the fact that the state party organization made an in-kind donation, yet it was not initially reported by the Jindal campaign. The violation involves mail expenses that should have been reported in July 23 campaign report, but was not noted until a September 7 amended report.

Jindal campaign accountant William Potter claims that it was just an error. "We are not trying to deny anything," he said. It seems that the mistake was really made by Jindal campaign Chief Timmy Teepell, who was aware of the in-kind contribution but failed to notify campaign accountants. Initially, the Jindal campaign believed that the expenses would only have to be reported by the Louisiana Republican Party; however, since Teepell discussed the expenditures with the LA GOP, it should have also been reported by the campaign. Potter admits a mistake was made, saying that "I feel that we let Bobby down on this. He wanted 100 percent reported straight forward."

After the complaint was lodged, an ethics board investigation determined that a violation had occurred. Ever since that time, a major controversy has erupted that has served to distract attention from the ambitious agenda being pursued by Jindal.

Initially, Jindal's spokesperson reported that the Governor's campaign would pay the \$2,500 fine; however, now it has been reported that the campaign treasurer will pay the fine. Yet, an official hearing has not taken place yet, so no fine can be paid at least for the time being.

After the ethics hearing is finally conducted and the \$2,500 fee is officially levied, my recommendation would be for the Governor to pay his own fine. Bobby Jindal was accountable for the conduct of his campaign. Any mistakes were ultimately his responsibility, not some campaign underling.

Jindal looks incredibly cheap by not offering to pay the fine himself and put the matter to rest. His actions are leading to questions about his judgment in this matter, as he is only causing the controversy to linger.

In my view, all campaign fines should be paid by the candidate, not the treasurer or the campaign. No other individual or entity should be able to shield a candidate from his responsibility.

Jindal's term has had a shaky beginning with members of the media complaining about his lack of accessibility and a controversy about his executive counsel who had to be shamed into dropping his ties to Indian gaming. Now there is the continuing debate about this ethics violation and the payment of the fine.

The timing of this violation could not have been worse for Jindal, as he gears up for the special session. This incident clearly shows that every aspect of our political system, including campaign finance reform, needs to be addressed by the legislators. The reforms must be widespread and far reaching to restore confidence in a broken system.

All of this is not only a distraction, but also quite surprising as most observers thought that Jindal would have a much smoother honeymoon during his first month. Interestingly, it is not a honeymoon at all, but a rocky start for Governor Jindal that very few people would have predicted.

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Comments

RhettsWife says...

Jeff, dear, is it not time that the citizens of this state take control of even Pi's indiscretion (through his subordinates of course). Pay it Pi from your personal funds. Now let's put this entire little issue of governmental ethichs, including those of the judiciary, into the hands of the citizens - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT. My that one would be very long. If the citizens could vote, then you would see the true politicians come out of the woodwork to show their ability to campaign. WE CAN HEAR THE CLAIM ALREADY: FOUL, FOUL, FOUL COMING FROM THE MOUTHS OF SOME POLITICIANS.

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