

education in Louisiana is in jeopardy, from pre-K, K-12, to higher education. I am disgusted with hearing about "government monopoly schools." Public education was established by the earliest Americans to provide opportunity for all, not just the wealthy. Now there is talk of privatizing our universities along with the K-12 grab. Those institutions belong to us - We the People of Louisiana - the same as our state parks and historic sites, museums, libraries and other state properties.

Are you actually going to allow the state of Louisiana to close universities, community and technical colleges, or price them out of reach of all but the wealthy? Do you really choose to let our state sink to the level of a Third World country? (I spend time in such a country every year, and believe me, Louisiana already looks much the same.)

While you have sort of passed some financial relief for higher education, some of us actually realize that it's not over til the session is over, and some ploys like the SAVE tax credit insanity provides non-existent funding. Plus, everything is open to jindal's veto.

**Four: be courageous and get our fiscal house in order:**

- ☑ Just do it. Roll back the corporate welfare that makes the business community that takes the profits and runs out of state a larger entitlement group than the poor. Jindal is now complaining about corporate welfare, which is laughable. He practically invented the idea.
- ☑ **Immediately cancel ridiculously expensive contracts such as Magellan and the five Bayou Health contracts that steal money by providing little or no services, services that were previously provided by mid-pay range state employees who actually got the work done.**
- ☑ Un-privatize the public hospitals, Office of Group Benefits operations, food service in the few remaining mental health hospitals, etc., so the money spent will actually pay for services to people, rather than profit for out-of-state companies. **Don't think you can't put Humpty Dumpty back together again? Look carefully at the history of the Office of Group Benefits and you will see that it has been done before.**
- ☑ **Reinstate reasonable taxes on business and individuals, such as the Stelly tax. The People voted it in, and y'all eliminated Stelly without asking The People if they agreed. We didn't. Consider that an additional, temporary one-percent income tax on the top one or two percent earners, until our budget house is back in order, may be necessary. (I'm probably in that number, so I have "skin in that game.") We have to accept the fact that we must pay for the services we need and want. Take a look at the tax bases of the good quality-of-life states, like Minnesota. They levied a small, temporary income tax hike - result: the state is rolling in revenue and business is booming.**

**Five: re-gain the trust of our citizens by re-defining YOUR loyalties.** Is your loyalty to a delusional sociopath named jindal, to selfish, to self-serving out-

out the latest LouisianaVoice post about how false accusations against Murphy Painter may have cost him his job as head of the Louisiana Commission on Alcohol and Tobacco Control. You and 1,495 others like LouisianaVoice, 1,495 people like LouisianaVoice refused to go along with Gov. Bobby Jindal's



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but in other respects we are slowly slipping back and becoming in many respects not unlike what the old Soviet Union was. Quite honestly what we need in this state is NOT more cut backs and more belt-tightening and more squeezing of blood from turnips — which no doubt we'll see from another staunchly conservative gubernatorial regime. We have had plenty of that already for most the past 20 years — and the results are there for all to see, as in a continual slow economy and poor quality of life in the state for the majority. It's time for a complete turn-around of mentality and have a plan for a state that embraces the 21st century and moving forward and having a quality infrastructure, quality services and a high quality for life for all of its citizens.

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**Stephen Winham**

on June 5, 2015 at 6:15 am

You make a lot of good points and I agree the problem cannot be solved by cuts alone – the math simply doesn't work. Yes, eliminating all contracts would solve the problem, mathematically, but not all contracts are bad and/or unnecessary. The problem is NOBODY seems to want to look at them closely and make a REAL effort to get rid of ALL the bad ones. And, you know what, that is also the problem with much of the rest of the budget.



**OneStateWorker**

on June 7, 2015 at 4:50 am | Reply

Robert,

I have appreciated your posts and most of your comments but your a dead wrong about the state not having a revenue problem.

On the inside of state government we have seen the cuts in services like long lines at OMV offices, the inability to get Unemployment Insurance, closed programs for the developmentally disabled, the cuts earthmother noted above and many, many, many others. We have also seen corporate taxation decrease more than 70% and cuts in taxes on the wealthy. We have seen subsidies for private K-12 schools and attacks on public education for the rest of us. We have seen welfare programs for entertainment production and many other huge companies while higher education and all these other programs are cut. The average state worker is already "taxed" about \$7000 PER YEAR in withheld performance increases.

Every enterprise always has some inefficiencies, particularly in the privatization contracts, even after severe budget cuts. But the services to, and safety of, the citizens of Louisiana have already been significantly impaired.

**WE NEED MORE REVENUE TO ACTUALLY BALANCE THE BUDGET FOR A CHANGE AND TO RESTORE SOME OF THE DAMAGE DONE TO LOUISIANA BY JINDAL AND HIS LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLICES.**



**R P**

on June 7, 2015 at 9:17 am

porn cases (as he should), but for the wrong reasons: publicity in an election year.

**Java Dude**

on June 4, 2015 at 12:12 pm | Reply

Hooah!



**Robert Burns**

on June 4, 2015 at 12:56 pm | Reply

Earthmother.....You know how to pose your arguments in a very authoritative and tough-to-refute manner!!



While I concur with a significant portion of your arguments, I do believe that, as John Kennedy expresses, "We don't have a revenue problem in Louisiana. We have a spending problem." Hence, I'm not in favor of increased revenue as the first means of solving our fiscal problems. What I am in favor of is Kennedy's efforts to get to the bottom of: 1) the magnitude of these consulting contracts, 2) their nature and purpose, and 3) whether they can be justified and why they may have been initiated in the first place.

Thanks for helping to keep a vacuum from forming while we anxiously await the release of Tom's book!!

**R P**

on June 4, 2015 at 11:59 pm | Reply

Question to you: yes, reform of these contracts is indeed quite worthwhile, however, if somehow we were to erase all of them how much in would that free up and would that be enough to take care of our needs in terms of undoing all of the damage that's been done to higher education and health care? Plus, while some may insist that the problem is one to do with spending and not to do with revenue it IS a fact that the state budget is around \$7-\$8 billion less than it was when Piyush Jindal first took over. That's hardly small potatoes. When do we reach the point of conceding that "okay, we've cut the fat and reached where here are important services that we need for the state to provide and not just that but provide in high quality fashion and need to see to it that are well funded as opposed to cut back?" What should the state budget be? \$15 billion? \$20 billion? \$25 billion? How about determining that figure first before making a broad pronouncement that we definitely do already have enough revenue to suit our needs? I will admit this about where I myself stand: I believe that as things are we definitely are essentially starving higher education and infrastructure and that because we do so we essentially condemn ourselves to having a slow economy and slow to zero growth of tax receipts. I firmly believe that you do have to invest in services and infrastructure that are important to have and you need to have if you want to see the economy moving at all. I would go so far as to contend that right now we have a near-nationwide cultural ethos of a disdain toward almost all of what government does and should do in a civilized society, except for military and defense and that such an ethos is akin to a cancer on our society with regard to American competitiveness in education, research, infrastructure, industry, quality of life and so on. We have a powerful military



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