

## ‘Pork’ pulled from budget

### Jindal vetoes slice \$16 million

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Gov. Bobby Jindal angered a number of lawmakers Monday by purging \$16 million in “pork barrel projects” from the state operating budget.

“For too long, state government has spent and spent with little regard for taxpayers’ money,” the governor said during a news conference at the State Capitol.

Jindal removed funding for community organizations, museums and a Baton Rouge balloon festival from the \$29.9 billion state operating budget. In all, Jindal “line-item vetoed” 258 legislative pet projects.

The vetoes prompted Senate President Joel Chaisson II, D-Destrehan, to suggest that Jindal made a mistake in eliminating so many projects.

Other lawmakers were more vehement about the vetoes.

“The governor is asinine,” said state Sen. Yvonne Dorsey, D-Baton Rouge, who lost funding for a number of groups.

Dorsey called Jindal “a blatant liar” and accused him of pandering to the national Republican Party in order to ultimately become president.

Dorsey said she hopes legislators return to the State Capitol to overturn the vetoes.

A veto session would be unprecedented even though it is automatically scheduled after the session adjourns.

The House and the Senate send a packet of the governor’s vetoes to legislators along with a ballot on whether a veto session is necessary. If a majority of either chamber votes against holding the session, it is cancelled.

State Rep. Pat Smith, D-Baton Rouge, said the governor’s action on the budget could result in a veto session.

“There’s no telling what it might trigger,” she said.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Mike Michot said he does not think the budget vetoes will prompt lawmakers to return to the State Capitol.

“The perception would be that it was in retaliation of the (legislative) pay raise bill,” said Michot, R-Lafayette. “It would be hard to overcome that perception.”

Under public pressure, Jindal vetoed a more than doubling of legislators pay earlier this month after promising them he would not intervene. He called the pay increase “excessive.”

In addition, lawmakers have been around the Capitol for the last six months and many have no desire to return for a while, Michot said.

Jindal said the vetoes affected some good organizations that should not be funded with public dollars.

He said taxpayers can make private donations to programs they consider to be worthwhile.

“This is what people are demanding and expecting,” Jindal said.

House Bill 1, the budget bill, had \$53 million in projects — also called “nongovernmental organizations,” or NGOs — before the governor’s vetoes.

The \$29.9 billion budget outlines the operating expenses for the state government spending year that started July 1. The budget ensures that the charity hospitals treat patients, that the public colleges hold classes and that state workers get paid.

Every year, legislators pile hundreds of projects in their districts into the budget. This year’s list included festivals, neighborhood groups and churches. The governor’s line-item veto power gives Jindal the authority to remove any project he does not want the state to fund.

Jindal said Monday that he told lawmakers in April that projects had to meet his criteria.

He said the projects:

- Must have a statewide or substantial regional impact.
- Must have been presented or openly discussed during the legislative session.
- Must be a state agency priority.
- Must have the proper disclosure form published online prior to consideration for funding.

Baton Rouge Rep. Smith said the criteria was unrealistic.

There is not enough time in the session for every organization to plead its case, she said.

Smith and Dorsey pushed for state funding for McKinley High School Alumni Association.

The governor cut \$370,000 for the organization, which runs a youth outreach program.

State Rep. Regina Barrow, D-Baton Rouge, said she was disappointed that Jindal purged \$160,000 for RIZ UP!

The organization, which Barrow directed before becoming a legislator, works to prevent teen pregnancies and to encourage youth leadership.

The governor cut a number of groups that provide after-school tutoring, Barrow said.

“I am certain this is going to be a huge burden for families,” she said.

Tommie Stout, coordinator for the Glen Oaks High School Security Dads, said the loss of \$15,000 in funding will hamper the group’s efforts to help teens without an involved father.

He said his organization sponsors outings to give the teens a mentor.

Louisiana Art and Science Museum President and Executive Director Carol Gikas said the museum lost \$45,000 in science education funding for schoolchildren from Jindal’s vetoes on Monday. The museum received \$100,000 a year ago and has been in HB1 for several years, Gikas said.

“I’m really not sure what we’re going to do now,” Gikas said, except somehow try to work with fewer resources.

The museum hosts more than 100,000 schoolchildren a year, she said. The museum has science education programs, including the state-of-the-art planetarium.

“Maybe I’m naive,” Gikas said. “I guess because I know the quality of the programs and the people served, but I really was surprised we were cut.”

Jim Brandt, president of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, said the governor applied the criteria more extensively than he expected.

“There’s obviously going to be a lot of disappointed legislators,” Brandt said.

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Funding cut from local programs

Gov. Bobby Jindal cut \$16 million in legislative projects from the state budget, including a number of local projects, such as:

- Achieve to Succeed, \$25,000.
- Advance Baton Rouge, \$50,000.
- Ascension Economic Development Corporation, \$85,000.
- Capital Area Legal Services Corp., \$100,000.
- City at Peace, \$15,000.
- East Baton Rouge Parish School Board for a United Way Agency, \$50,000.
- Glen Oaks High School Security Dads Inc., \$15,000.
- Hot Air Balloon Festival, \$25,000.
- Knock Knock Children’s Museum, \$250,000.
- Leadership Seminars of America, \$30,000.
- Livingston Outdoor Sports Association Inc., \$80,000.
- Louisiana Arts and Science Museum, \$45,000.
- Louisiana Association of Museums, \$50,000.
- Louisiana Leadership Institute School of Performing Arts, \$100,000.
- McKinley High School Alumni Association, \$370,000.
- North Baton Rouge Community Center, \$150,000.
- Opera Louisiane, \$25,000.
- Options Inc., \$10,000.

Progress 63, \$400,000.

RIZ UP!, \$160,000.

Scotlandville Community Development Corporation, \$15,000.

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church Charitable Foundation, \$30,000.

The Hope Group, \$55,000.

Urban Restoration Enhancement Corp., \$5,000

Watson YMCA, \$25,000.

Young Men's Christian Association of Baton Rouge Baranco/Clark branch, \$25,000.

Jordan Blum and Marsha Shuler of the Capitol news bureau contributed to this report