

## Help Jindal find his blind spots

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Just because state Sen. Robert Adley and Rep. Wayne Waddell pop up each year with efforts to open the governor's office to more scrutiny doesn't make their cause any less just.

Gov. Bobby Jindal has built a national reputation on his efforts to push through ethics reform in a state that was due an ethical makeover. But many of the efforts skirted the governor's office to the point that the administration is among the least transparent in the nation, Adley has said.

Last year, Jindal successfully pushed through legislation under the guise of openness but which actually kept more administration documents out of sight, based on broad exemptions for papers that were part of "executive deliberations and work product." Almost any paper used to formulate policy and spend tax dollars might be construed to fit those areas. The law change was opposed not only by this page but the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, which advocates best practices for government.

Adley's new Senate Bill 593 would undo much of that law and make many documents more readily available to public review.

Jindal seems to have a blind spot when it comes to ethical issues regarding his office. Though state law prohibits fundraising during the legislative session, he saw nothing hypocritical about attending a French Quarter fundraiser last weekend for the Louisiana Republican Party. It was following that same event that his chief campaign fundraiser, Allee Bautsch, suffered a broken leg and her boyfriend a concussion and fractured jaw in an incident being investigated by New Orleans police.

Though Jindal presumably would get no direct money from the Republican fundraiser, this is a governor who has spent much of the past two years traveling throughout the country raising both campaign cash and his visibility for possible future aspirations. This fundraiser came at the end of the Southern Republican Leadership Conference that had featured GOP luminaries such as Sarah Palin and Newt Gingrich. Clearly, Jindal's best interests and that of the Republican Party are intertwined and the state ethics law needs to be broadened to ban appearances at such political fundraisers.

Meantime, we recommend to state lawmakers a careful consideration of Adley's and Waddell's efforts for this session. Better to err on the side of open government than the alternative, and to

make sure the governor is playing by the same rules imposed on them and other officials throughout the state.