

Jindal appearing at fundraiser for state Republican Party

Appearance skirts law on fundraising

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By Jan Moller

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BATON ROUGE -- Gov. Bobby Jindal is barred by state law from raising campaign cash during the ongoing legislative session. But that isn't stopping him from headlining a fundraising reception for the state Republican Party next week.

The April 9 event at Brennan's Restaurant in New Orleans costs \$10,000 per couple for those who want to have their picture taken with Jindal and Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who is scheduled to be in New Orleans to address the Southern Republican Leadership Conference. For \$5,000, couples get to attend a dinner reception with the chief executives.

While the event is legal, a government watchdog group says it exposes a loophole in a state law since the state party is a heavy contributor to Jindal's campaign.

The state law, approved in 2004, forbids Louisiana governors and members of the Legislature from raising money for their own campaigns and political committees during legislative sessions and for 30 days after a regular session adjourns. But it does not prevent them from raising money for outside political groups such as state parties.

Campaign disclosure reports show that the state GOP funneled \$114,980 to Jindal's campaign in 2009 through a series of in-kind contributions.

Jim Brandt, president of the nonprofit Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, said that makes Jindal an "indirect benefactor" of the money he's helping to raise. "It's something that needs to be looked at," Brandt said. "This is a loophole that needs to be tightened up."

Although Jindal's name appears at the top of the invitation, Jindal spokesman Kyle Plotkin said the governor is not hosting the event but is appearing as a "special guest."

"We're complying with the law," Plotkin said. "The fundraiser is for the party, not for the governor's campaign committee."

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