

Louisiana Elects Pro-Right to Work Governor

Jindal Team Likely to Push For More Union-Free 'Charter' Schools

After a campaign in which education issues were hotly debated, Louisiana citizens voted decisively October 20 to elect pro-Right to Work U.S. Congressman Bobby Jindal (R) as their new governor over two teacher union boss-endorsed candidates.

Mr. Jindal, the son of Indian immigrants, won the governor's race by carrying more than half the votes against a total of 11 opponents in the Bayou State's "jungle" primary. Under state law, if one primary candidate secures more than half the total votes cast, he or she is declared the winner without a runoff.

In a desperate bid to keep the highly regarded congressman below 50% so that he could be torpedoed in a runoff, the hierarchy of the state's largest teacher union, the Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE/NEA), endorsed two Democrats, Walter Boasso and Foster Campbell.

Mr. Campbell was also endorsed by the bosses of the state's #2 teacher union, the Louisiana Federation of Teachers (LFT/AFT).

Despite the full-throated support of teacher union officials, between them Mr. Boasso and Mr. Campbell were not even able to muster 30% of the total vote, compared to Mr. Jindal's 54%.

"The Louisiana election results clearly constitute voters' firm rejection of the LAE and LFT union hierarchies' efforts to preserve and expand their monopoly-bargaining privileges over teachers," said Doug Stafford, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"Gov.-elect Jindal, who takes office in January, has a mandate to make education policy changes that would help independent-minded teachers get out from under union monopoly control. And if he fulfills that mandate, schoolchildren, parents and taxpayers will also benefit."

'We Should Welcome Expansion of Successful Charter Schools'

The election of Mr. Jindal is just the latest setback for teacher union monopolists in Louisiana.

While the number of students in New Orleans, the state's largest school system, has fallen by almost half since Hurricane Katrina flooded the city in 2005, the membership of the United Teachers of



Union-free charter school teachers are helping New Orleans students markedly improve their performance.

Louisiana Gov.-elect Bobby Jindal (R) wants successful charter schools to be able to operate statewide.

New Orleans (UTNO/LFT/AFT) has fallen by more than 75%, according to an early November news report.

A key reason for the UTNO plummet is that nearly half of the more than 80 public schools operating in New Orleans today are "charter" schools that are run by private, usually nonprofit organizations rather than the school district.

Of the 20 top-performing schools in the city, 17 are charters, according to an article this summer in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*.

Although charter schools may legally be unionized, up to now teacher union officials have secured monopoly-bargaining power in only a handful of America's 3500 charter schools, and not in any of Louisiana's.

In his gubernatorial campaign platform, Mr. Jindal strongly supported the charters that have already enabled thousands of talented and hard-working teachers to get out from under monopolistic unionism:

"We should welcome the expansion of successful charter schools."

And in his signed and returned Committee candidate survey, Mr. Jindal vowed 100% support for the Right to Work principle, including, of course, retention of Louisiana's Right to Work law.

More than 30 states currently authorize and promote union monopoly bargaining over teachers and other public school employees. Though Louisiana law does not explicitly authorize monopoly bargaining, many school districts, especially in the state's larger jurisdictions, have long acquiesced to it.

Union Monopoly Bargaining Undermines Schools' Ability To Educate Children

This abusive system grants the bosses of one teacher union monopoly power to negotiate over the pay, benefits, and working conditions of all teachers -- including teachers who don't wish to join or have anything to do with a union.

"Bobby Jindal won the Louisiana governorship on a platform of preserving and expanding the successful union-free charter schools in New Orleans and also on bringing such charters to the rest of the state," commented Mr. Stafford.

"If he implements this important reform, and also seizes every other opportunity to roll back union monopoly bargaining in public education, he will have performed a great service for Louisianans." 📌