

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH GOVERNOR BOBBY JINDAL (R-LA)

SUBJECT: BOLD REFORM THAT WORKS

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MR. HAMRICK: Good afternoon and welcome to the National Press Club for our speaker luncheon today featuring Governor Bobby Jindal.

My name is Mark Hamrick and I'm membership secretary of the National Press Club and I work for Associated Press.

I'd like to welcome club members and their guests in the audience today, as well as those of you watching on C-SPAN or listening on XM Satellite Radio and streaming on the web.

We are looking forward to today's speech. And afterward, I will ask as many questions from the audience as time permits. Please hold your applause during the speech so that we do have time for as many questions as possible.

And for our broadcast audience, I'd like to explain that if you hear applause, it may be from the guests and members of the general public who attend, not necessarily -- and in fact, maybe unlikely -- that it's coming from the working press.

I'd like now to introduce our head table guests and ask them to stand briefly as their names are called. We begin from your right: Bruce Alpert, a reporter from the New Orleans Times Picayune; William

Cassidy, he is executive editor of Traffic World; Dipka Bombani (sp), a reporter with Platts and member of the National Club Board of Governors; Melissa Sellers, press secretary to the governor; Rick Dunham, former NPC president, Washington bureau chief with The Houston Chronicle; Joel Chaisson, president of Louisiana Senate.

Skipping over the podium: Angela Greiling Keane with Bloomberg News, chair of the Speakers Committee; we'll skip the speaker for a moment; Ron Baygents with Kuwait News Agency and the Press Club's Speakers Committee member who organized today's luncheon -- thank you, Ron. Jim Tucker -- he's the speaker of the House in Louisiana. Sho Chandra, economics reporter -- even though she coached me on that name in the beginning. I apologize. She works for Bloomberg; John Fales, aka Sergeant Shaft, with The Washington Times; and Gerry Shields, a reporter with the Baton Rouge Advocate.

Now you can applaud. (Applause.)

Our guest speaker today became the nation's youngest governor at the age of 36. He took office in January after a campaign that made ethics reform the cornerstone of his platform. He offered plans for reforming health, education and transportation systems, as well as for encouraging economic development and continuing recovery efforts in areas devastated in 2005 by the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

There is said to be an adage about governors in Louisiana that they get two terms there: One in office and one in prison. (Laughter.) Now, that punch line is setup by an understanding of the state's history of corruption in government.

A Republican working with what is essentially Democratic-controlled legislature, the governor's already pushed through an aggressive ethics reform agenda during two special sessions of the Louisiana legislature. There's also been legislation approved to eliminate taxes on business investment, utilities and debt.

This son of parents who themselves moved to Louisiana from India, was born and raised in Baton Rouge. He graduated from high school there. At Brown University he graduated with honors in biology and public policy. At the Oxford University he was a Rhodes Scholar, having turned down admissions to medical and law schools at Harvard and Yale.

In the 1990s, he was secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, and executive director of the national bipartisan commission on the future of Medicare. President George W. Bush appointed him to serve as assistant secretary to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service in 2001 -- no stranger to Washington. In 2004, he was elected to the U.S. Congress, representing the first district of his state. He was reelected in 2006. His victory in the election for governor last October came in his second attempt to secure the office.

Fresh off his appearance on "The Tonight Show" this week, please give a warm National Press Club welcome to Governor Bobby Jindal. (Applause.)

GOV. JINDAL: Thank you very much.

It has indeed been an exciting week -- the start of the week on "The Tonight Show", ending up here. I've been looking forward all week to being here, but I do have to start with a disclaimer. You know, the National Press Club had a pretty exciting Monday as well. My disclaimer is I don't intend to be nearly as entertaining or as newsworthy as Reverend Wright. So I hope I'm not going to disappoint you.

Indeed, the day after I was elected governor, we had a press conference. And I was asked by the Louisiana press corps how I intended to celebrate my victory. And I warned them: I said, my intention is to go down in history as one of Louisiana's most boring, but hopefully most effective, governors. My wife tells me we've got the boring part down just fine. Now we've got to work on the effective.

You know, this election last fall in Louisiana was an historic election -- not only because it was the first statewide election after the hurricanes, but also because of term limits. We had 60 brand new members come out of 105 members of the House, several statewide -- newly statewide elected officials. I spent the campaign going across the state, going to every corner of the state -- every parish, every little town -- saying: We have got to change our state! Indeed, reporters got tired of hearing me say, "We can change. We must change. We will change." But it is so important.

You know, you have heard a little bit about Louisiana's colorful history and that may be understating it a little bit. Billy Tozan in this town famously said, "My state is both half under water and half under indictment." (Laughter.) And there have been stories and jokes for years about not only our governors, but other elected officials. We had a governor who's official motto was "Let the good times roll."

The problem -- the problem with all those jokes was that the good times didn't roll for everybody in Louisiana. The good times didn't roll for our people. We're not a poor state. I said on inauguration day, "We are a wealthy state." We may have had poor leadership, but

we are not a poor state. We are a blessed state. Thirty percent of the nation's oil and gas comes off our coast; 30 percent of the nation's fisheries; five of the nation's largest ports; one of only two states to have six major rail lines; productive farmland; productive timber industry. We should be running circles around every other state in the country!

And yet, even before the storms -- even before we'd ever heard of Katrina and Rita -- we were one of the only states in the South to be losing our people -- losing 30,000 people. Moving out faster, more quickly than they were moving into the state. The reason I ran for office is we had to do something about that. We had to change that.

Now, we started -- I said on inauguration day we were going to wage a war on corruption and incompetence. And we did that! We called a special session. And I say "we" on purpose. I want to introduce two representatives -- two leaders -- a representative and a

senator. I want to ask them to stand. I didn't come here alone. I came here with my good friends and fellow leaders from Louisiana.

We've got -- to my right we've got Jim Tucker. You've heard his name before. The speaker of the House. Jim, if you'll stand. (Applause.) And Joel Chaisson. Please give Jim a round of applause. And Joel Chaisson, president of the Senate. (Applause.)

I thank them both for being -- and don't worry. We made sure the legislature wasn't in session so it's safe for all three of us to be up here. But want to thank them for being here.

Let me tell you a little bit about these two men. Jim's a Republican speaker of the House in a House that's majority Democratic. Now, Joel is the president of the Senate. He's a Democratic president in a majority Democratic Senate, but you know what? Party labels don't matter. And I know that's kind of a foreign concept to the way that things usually work in Washington.

And when I was running for office, I said one of the problems in Congress is too often people wake up thinking of themselves as Democrats or Republicans first -- not as Americans first. That's not how most of us wake up and think. We're Louisianans first; we're Americans first. None of the reforms that we've gotten done so far could have happened without their leadership, without their help.

I know it's also unusual in Washington to try to share credit. I've seen grown men and women fight to get their names first on a bill. This isn't about Governor Jindal. It's not about Speaker Tucker. It's not about the President of the Senate Joel Chaisson. This is about Louisiana's future.

We're not going to get this chance again. I'd argue this may be one of the most important times in my lifetime for my state. I would argue that history is going to look back on us and either say that we made the right decisions for Louisiana to move forward or to say if we don't seize this opportunity, that we wasted the best opportunity we'll get in our lifetimes to fix our state.

Most communities, most cities, don't get to draw on a blank sheet of paper. So often we will say, boy, without a blank sheet of paper I would never have come up with that failed public housing strategy. I never would have come up with that failed public health care strategy, would never have built the public schools that way. I would have done it differently.

And I'm not here to tell you that Katrina was a good thing. We lost over 1,000 people, hundreds of billions of dollars of damage. But we have got a chance to rebuild better than what was there before the storms. It would be a mistake to pretend like the storms caused all of our problems. We had challenges even before those storms.

We started addressing those challenges -- and I had the help of the speaker of the House and the president of the Senate. We declared war on corruption. And I know, a lot of people kind of laugh. You start talking about Louisiana setting the gold standard for ethics --

that's not the first thought that comes to mind. It sounds like a White House correspondent skip when you think about Louisiana and ethics reform in the same sentence. But we did it!

We proposed dozens of bills and the legislature worked long and hard and they passed dozens of bills. Why was this so important? We all know the jokes, but maybe you've seen some of the rankings. The Better Government Association said Louisiana was fourth worse on their integrity index. The Center for Public Integrity said we were 44th or 43rd worse, depending on the year you looked at -- 44th or 43rd worst in their disclosure list year after year.

LSU and Forbes both did studies. Our university and Forbes Magazine both did studies and they said this: The number one thing that Louisiana could do to attract jobs and investment -- the number one thing we could do -- was to crack down on corruption. I personally went to New York City to talk to business leaders about investing in Louisiana -- even before I took my oath of office. One of them looked at me and said, I want to invest down there, but I'm not going to right now, because he said he was scared off by this notion there was a Louisiana way of doing business, that who you know is more important than what you knew. We had to change that.

We passed dozens of bills. I won't go through all the details, but I'll tell you this: We passed one of the nation's most comprehensive disclosure bills disclosing income, assets, liabilities -- not only for our legislatures and our statewide elected officials,

for local elected officials for appointed officials. They tried to do that last year; they couldn't get it done. They couldn't get it done. It got killed, because some wanted to include local officials and some didn't. We included everybody.

Now, why is that so important? It's important so that our voters, our taxpayers know that their elected leaders are serving -- serving the entire state, not themselves. We literally went from 44th worst in the country -- according to the Center for Public Integrity, we are now first, best in the country getting 99 out 100 points. More points than any state has ever gotten in their history of doing these surveys.

But the second change we made: We said, no longer do we want the inherent conflicts of interest. We prohibited our statewide -- our elected officials, our legislatures, appointed officials -- from doing business with the state. No longer did we want the brother-in-law contracts, the backroom deals. We wanted a level playing field -- not only for them, but for their families. Not only when they're in office, but after they leave office as well.

The third big change we made: We required more disclosure from lobbyists. We want to know how much they make; what they're lobbying; who they're lobbying; what they're doing down there in Baton Rouge. All of that information is now online.

In addition to that, we made other changes. We got rid of the free golf trips, free football tickets. Got also -- capped the lavish meals that have been commonplace in Baton Rouge, in the state's

capital, before. Put all government spending online.

You go through dozens of these changes, but the bottom line was this: We worked hard to restore the people's trust in the system in Louisiana, but we also wanted to send a message to the country that Louisiana's open for business. It's a new day. That we're going to change everything in Louisiana but the food. And I don't mean that quite literally. We'll save a couple of other things as well.

But this is -- it was so important that we start there. And we purposely started with the war on corruption and already we're seeing results. I talked to the CEO of Tidewater -- a large oil and gas service company that was thinking at one point about moving its headquarters out of New Orleans to Houston -- exactly the kinds of jobs we're trying to keep and attract. The CEO told me, thanks to the reforms in Louisiana they're giving Louisiana another chance. He said after the elections, they saw a spirit of reform. He said it's not about financial incentives. We're not looking for incentives to stay here. We're doing well, but we see an opportunity for a new day here in Louisiana. So our message to the country is come look at Louisiana, you'll like what you see!

But that was just the first step. We didn't stop there. And it is so important that we do everything we can to make Louisiana

inviting for investment, for jobs, for opportunity. Because we export many great things out of our state. We export food, oil and gas products, petrochemical products, manufactured products, crops. We export many things. Our greatest export are the sons and daughters of Louisiana that leave every year because of the lack of opportunity. We've got to put an end to that. So we want to reclaim that potential.

Thomas Jefferson said, after the Louisiana Purchase, said, "New Orleans has the potential, because of its location, to be the greatest city in the world." And he was right. And for a while we were among the great -- greatest cities in the world. You look in those decades after the purchase, I don't know if you realize this. New Orleans was home to the first opera house in America. We had more millionaires than New York City, larger banks, larger ports than Philadelphia. It was the place where risk takers, entrepreneurs -- those that wanted to take a chance and build a better future came with their ideas, with their capital, with their desire to work.

How have we gone from being a place that attracted such talent to a place that can't even keep our own sons and daughters in our state? Well, the first step was taking and attacking the war on corruption. The second step -- we came back in a second special session. And we said, we've got to remove further obstacles that are stopping investment in our state. We did away with the business tax on utilities. Sped up the elimination of the tax on debt on new equipment.

I want you to think about this: We're one of only three states that taxes new companies when they're buying new equipment -- one of the only states that taxes them when they're borrowing money.

Now, I kind of made fun of Senator McCain and got in a little bit of trouble when I did. I said this in front of him -- I wouldn't say it behind his back unless I'd say it in front of him. I had the chance to introduce him in Baton Rouge. And I said, "I'm kind of like the senator. I may not know all that much about economics, but I do know this: If you want to discourage an activity, tax it. If you want to encourage an activity, don't tax it." And it was pretty simple. If you want businesses to borrow money to expand and modernize, to invest in your state, don't tax them when they're trying to do it -- especially when your neighboring states don't have those taxes.

The problem is those taxes were leftover from a legacy when our leaders thought that businesses had to be in Louisiana. We literally had a governor -- Huey Long built a bridge in Baton Rouge lower than standard bridges to stop ships from going north and unloading their cargo. The attitude was, you've got to be in Louisiana. You don't have a choice. Businesses have a choice today.

We had plant managers come tell us their newest equipment in Louisiana is older than their oldest equipment in any other facility in the country. Are they going to shut down their plants overnight? No. But in communities like Bastrop and Pineville and other communities that depend on these facilities -- they worry year after year about whether those jobs will still be there. Now the companies are saying, look, if you remove those taxes we can make investments in Louisiana. We can modernize our facilities and we can be competitive.

But we did more: During that session we took one-time dollars and put them in one-time needs. Now, there's a radical thought. If we did anything less than that it would be like using your credit card to pay your mortgage. But we said, that's not right. Let's be fiscally responsible. In addition to cutting taxes, let's invest in our roads and our infrastructure. We have a \$14 billion backlog.

Every governor before me in modern history has talked about the need to raise taxes. We said, nonsense. Let's not only use our surplus dollars, but let's also dedicate our existing transportation dollars for transportation needs. Now, there's a radical thought. Let's actually do for the voters what we told them we were going to do in the first place. We could almost double what we spend on roads over the next few years without raising taxes. We're already seeing the results. We're already seeing the results! Before that investment, Louisianans wasted hundreds of hours and hundreds of dollars every year in traffic. By making that investment, we invested in one port in the Port of Terrebonne. A large shipbuilder has now announced they're going to create 1,000 jobs, average pay over \$54,000 a job. Those are good paying, great jobs for our state. What it shows is if we'll invest in our infrastructure, we can grow our economy. We can attract opportunities for our state.

But in addition to that, we also put investments to pay down the pension debt for our teachers, for our state workers. One of the least exciting things you can do as a politician, by the way. Constitutionally we weren't obligated to do anything for over 20 years, but every dollar we invest now saves over \$4 in interest

payments. We also invested tens of millions of dollars in deferred maintenance -- leaky roofs and pipes -- one of the least sexy things you can do as a politician. No cutting ribbons. No names on new buildings. Fixing what the state already owns. It was a fiscally responsible session. The point was to show the people we'd be good stewards with their money.

And now we're in the regular session. We're in our third session of the year already. Now, we have said our number one priority -- the administration's number one priority in this session is workforce development. Now, don't get me wrong. We've got other priorities. We're working on bills to crack down on crime, to improve our health care, to do other things for our state, but our number one priority is work force development. Why is that? Because the states that are going to be successful, the countries that are going to be successful economically, are going to be the ones that have the smartest, most skilled, most capable workers.

For decades, we've grown our economy based on having cheap energy, natural resources, having a good regulatory environment. And those are good advantages and we'll continue building those advantages. But to succeed in today's economy, we need a skilled workforce. Louisiana is enjoying a near record-low unemployment rate. We haven't seen unemployment rates this low for the last 30 years. Right now there are 100,000 jobs we can't fill today. Vacancies we have today for skilled workers, for welders, for nurses, for computer technicians.

We've announced five major initiatives in this session. Number one: We want to change the way that our community and technical colleges are funded. Right now our colleges actually make money training technicians and massage therapists. They lose money training welders and nurses. How crazy is that? Northrop Grumman stood up when we made our announcement and said, we'll hire 1,000 new people in Louisiana today if we can find the skilled workers -- 1,000 good paying jobs, jobs with benefits.

We want to change the formula to award high-cost, high-demand, high-growth jobs. Here's a radical idea: Let's actually train our students for the jobs that are out there! Right now we can't fill the jobs that are there and our people are still leaving the state. Why is that? We've got 100,000 jobs, 30,000 people are leaving. We're not providing them with the skills that are in demand by the employers that are in the state.

The second change we need to make: We need to prevent more of our kids from dropping out. You know, I love it -- I love it when kids go to college. My dad was the first in our family to get beyond the fifth grade. I was the president of the University of Louisiana system. It's a great thing when a child goes to college. I'll be speaking at several graduations this year. Many of those students will be the first in their families to graduate. Not every child is going to college.

And what we've done in Louisiana is too many of our kids are dropping out. Well, they don't see a future for themselves. For the kids going to college, make sure they're taking AP and honors courses

and they're ready to hit the ground running. For the students not going to college, let's give them dual enrollment courses so they can get technical credits even before they leave high school so they see a future for them so they'll continue their post secondary education.

In Louisiana we send 80 percent of our high school students that continue their education to a four-year school. In California they send 80 percent of their kids to a community or technical colleges. The result is we have one of the highest dropout rates in our K-12 educational system. So the second change we're making is making a dual-enrollment system where our kids will be able to continue their education, whatever their interests are.

The third change: We're going to offer a first day guarantee. We're going to say our people and to employers: Our people will be ready to work on the first day or we'll retrain them for free. That's how confident we'll be in our training programs. That's how confident we'll be that our people are going to be ready to work.

Fourth: We're going to create a quick -- a rapid response fund so we can go to employers making significant investments, willing to grow or retain jobs in Louisiana and guarantee them we will pay for their workforce training needs. We will guarantee them they have the skilled workers they need to thrive and succeed in our state.

And then fifth and finally: You know, I recruited the head -- the president -- the former president of Louisiana's Fortune -- one of Louisiana's Fortune 500 companies to come be the secretary of my Department of Labor. I didn't expect him in three months to try to work himself out of a job, but he has.

He came and said, we need to replace the Department of Labor. It makes no sense to have an agency run by bureaucrats trying to serve the business community. We need to replace this with regional business councils with a majority membership of local businesses. They should have these dollars and allocate for workforce training programs. And it should be a real one-stop shop with daycare training dollars and transportation dollars so that it is truly flexible and nimble and responsible to the needs of government. We've got to move at the speed of government, not bureaucracy.

Now, there are many other things I could talk about, but those are the five most important initiatives. We've got to get this right for the future of Louisiana. Our package, by the way, was endorsed by the Louisiana Business Association. It was endorsed by the AFL-CIO. It was endorsed by regional chambers of commerce.

Now, I think these three steps are critical to the future of my state: First, cracking down on corruption; secondly, getting rid of those taxes that were holding us back and investing in infrastructure; third, training our workforce.

I know our time is short and I want to leave as much time for questions as possible, but I want -- if you'll give me just a minute -- to tell you a little bit about the recovery in New Orleans and Louisiana.

First, I want to thank the American people. We live in an incredibly generous country. Now, let me tell you: I had the chance to go to the Lower 9th Ward with many members of the national media last week. And every day that you go down -- not only to New Orleans, but Cameron Parish and all over our great state, but especially in south Louisiana -- you'll meet the most amazing people. We had last week high school students from Massachusetts and Maine down there on spring break gutting homes. We had bankers from Deutsche Bank using their personal vacation time -- their own money -- to come down there and repair homes. You have colleges, you have churches, you have faith-based groups from all over the country.

A lot of people ask me -- are you worried about Katrina fatigue? I'm not worried about Katrina fatigue, as long as I see every day these incredible people. Young people, retirees, working people that are coming down, sending down donations, doing so much to help us get back on our feet. We are grateful to the country for the help.

The second point I want to make is our number one priority -- and I hope to get to talk to this in questions -- our number one priority: We've got to build the levees back to the way that they should have been built the first place and we've got to restore our wetlands. This is important not only for Louisiana. It's important for our country.

Those are America's wetlands: 30 percent of the nation's fisheries, important estuaries for migratory birds, an important source of domestic oil and gas. This nation has made an investment in the Everglades, in the Chesapeake. We need to make a similar commitment to restoring America's wetlands.

The third point I'll make: We also need help cutting through the bureaucracy. And I could spend hours telling you stories that will make you laugh and cry about some of the ridiculous bureaucracy right after the storms. It's getting better, but we still need help.

And then finally, the final thing I'll say about the recovery is that we are going to be back. And we're going to be back stronger and better than we were before the storms. We're not going to force our people to go to the emergency rooms to get health care. They'll have outpatient-based care. Already you're seeing incredible reforms in K-12 education. The Gates Foundation, the Broad Foundation, Teach for America, charter schools -- all over the city.

If you want to see the newest, most exciting promising reforms in K-12 education, then come to New Orleans. I couldn't have told you that before the storms. You're going to see brand new public housing, affordable housing, mixed development communities that integrate housing and opportunities and work and school and health care services.

In other words, the New Orleans you'll come back will have the great architecture, the great food, the great music. But it will also be a cutting edge American city. It'll be like that city Thomas Jefferson described: The world's greatest city. A city where risk

takers, entrepreneurs, and others can come to pursue their dreams.

I want to thank again the speaker of the House, the president of the Senate for coming with me, showing the country we're working across party lines, across geographic lines to move our state forward. My message to the country is: Come to Louisiana. Come invest. Come create jobs. Come home. There's opportunity like there's never been before.

They may never make a Hollywood movie about my life. I may indeed fulfill my desire to go down in history as one of Louisiana's most boring governors. The legacy I want to leave is a legacy of effective leadership so my children don't have to leave the state to pursue their dreams.

My mom's already made it abundantly clear to me -- maybe your parents will like this. My mom says, look, son. You can go wherever you want. Those grandchildren are staying right here -- (laughter) -- because if I could have had grandchildren without you, you wouldn't be here today -- governor or not! (Laughter.)

I want to thank you for inviting me. Thank you for your interest in Louisiana's renaissance, rebirth and recovery.

Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

MR. HAMRICK: Well, it's interesting your mom said you could go anywhere you want, because that's pretty much what the first several questions we were given cards about deals with -- where you might be going or where you might be staying.

And the question gets to the notion of Senator McCain's candidacy for the presidency.

And apparently he was in your state last week, and one question -- and we've had at least a half-dozen questions that are all about the same subject -- wondering whether you are interested in being his running mate and could you talk about what you discussed, to the degree that you aren't divulging anything that was talked about in confidence?

GOV. JINDAL: Certainly. Well, first of all, like anybody, whose name has been put on such a list, it's certainly very flattering, but I've said it several times before, I'll say it to be -- to have your name even on the list, or mentioned publicly, but I'll say it again. I've got the job I want. When I campaigned across the state, I told people, this is an historic time for the people of Louisiana. We won't get to make these changes again. This isn't a normal time, normal piece of history for my state. And the changes we make are generational changes. I want to be a part of that. I want to help lead that effort. This may be the only elected position I'll ever have, and that's just fine for me. This is not a stepping stone for me. This is an opportunity to help lead my state forward. So I'm flattered. I've got the job I want. I think the lieutenant governor is spreading these rumors. I think he'd like to have my job. (Laughter.) I don't blame him, it's a great job to have, but he's going to have to wait, hopefully, seven years before he gets a crack

at this job. I like the job I've got.

In terms of what I did talk to Senator McCain about, you know, he came down to the Lower 9th Ward and spent some time there. He came to Baton Rouge and spent some time there. We talked about our recovery needs. We talked specifically about levees, about wetlands, about cutting through the bureaucracy. Two remarks he made that I want to echo for you because I very much appreciated him making these statements, these commitments and these remarks.

Number one, and he has said this repeatedly -- he said, "It makes no sense -- it makes no sense for Congress to be funding earmarks and bridges to nowhere if we're not funding restoring America's wetlands and rebuilding those levees." And we certainly appreciated hearing that in Louisiana. And secondly, he reiterated his commitment to getting Louisiana not only the 100-year flood protection, but also the Category 5 protection, which involves restoring our wetlands. He was asked by reporters about the resources. He said, "When it comes to protecting American lives, the resources will be available." And we certainly appreciated his commitments. He made many other commitments about cutting through the bureaucracy and other things. You know, his wife was coming on Leno a couple of days after me, so we also -- I gave her some tips -- no I didn't give her any tips. (Laughter.)

MR. HAMRICK: Well -- and as a follow up to that, people are saying will you promise that you will not leave the office of governor if, indeed, he asks you to run?

GOV. JINDAL: You know, I'll say this again. I'll make this prediction right here, right now. He's not going to ask me to run. I think it'd be presumptuous to turn down something I've not been offered. I likened it earlier this week to like going to high school and telling the prettiest girl in the high school, "I'm not going to prom with you," before she asks you. (Scattered laughter.) I mean, she might think that was a little odd.

Look, my commitment to the people of Louisiana is -- I've got the best job in the world. I really do. I wake up, and I don't know any other way to say this, on the worst day -- and you know, even on the worst day on this job, I get up every day and thank God. I feel like I'm the luckiest guy in the world. I've got a job where I get to make a difference for my state, I'm married to my high school sweetheart, which is not technically true. See, I liked her in high school. I asked her out. She turned me down. (Scattered laughter.) Took me 10 years to convince her to go out with me. Got three beautiful kids. We've got great leadership in the House and the Senate. We're getting great things done for our state. So I'm happy where I am. My prediction is I'll be running for re-election and I want to be governor of the state of Louisiana. That's what I campaigned to be. I've got the job that I want.

MR. HAMRICK: People want to know about sort of maybe, your philosophical association with Senator McCain. He had some negative comments about the federal response to Hurricane Katrina. How do you feel about what he had to say about that? And how do you feel about the gas tax holiday idea?

GOV. JINDAL: Sure. You know, the senator made -- it obviously got quite a bit of national attention -- he was asked about the response to the storms. I think people were relieved to hear, at least in Louisiana, were relieved to hear the senator say, "Never again," when he was asked about the response. Look, there was plenty of blame to go around. And it doesn't do a whole lot of good just to point figures at the federal level, at the state level, at the local level. But as somebody who was on the ground, as somebody who lived through it, I can sit here and tell you that clearly our nation's got to do a better job if, God forbid, there's another disaster like that, and not only in rescue efforts.

I was literally in a sheriff's office and he was spitting nails. I said, "Sheriff, what's got you so mad?" He was on the phone yelling at somebody saying, "I'm the sheriff and if you don't like this, you can come arrest me." I said, "Sheriff, what's the matter?" Literally, there were people in the water. He'd gotten on the radio,

they had people going out there in boats to rescue people, and he said, "I went on the radio and he asked for people to come help and rescue people out of the water." Well, the volunteer showed up. We live in a great country. Volunteers, recreational boaters, showed up with their boats. Sheriff's deputies from all over showed up with their boats ready to go. Some bureaucrat -- and he literally, what he told them was go to the causeway interstate exchange and that became a boat launch.

I mean, you could just go to the interstate and launch your boat directly in the water, go out there and pick up people off their rooftops. He didn't have enough deputies to do it. Some bureaucrat showed up and said to the boaters, "You're not allowed to go in the water unless you have proof of registration and insurance." People are about to die and they're worried about paperwork. I told the sheriff -- I told the good sheriff, "Sheriff I agree with you. That's ridiculous." Before you know it, he's back on the phone, and I hear him say, "I got Congressman Jindal here. You can come arrest us both if you don't like it ." I said, "Wait a minute. I don't remember volunteering for that, Sheriff." (Laughter.) I said, "Who are you talking to?" He was all, "Aw just the radio stations. Don't worry about it." (Laughter.) But it wasn't just in the rescue efforts. Many people think, "Well, look, the rescue efforts were over, things got immediately better in the recovery efforts as well."

I was telling a story earlier this morning about, when we were trying to rebuild schools, at one point, the bureaucracy was telling us, "Well, your buses were used when they were flooded, so you've got to go find buses of the same age." Well, you find a store that sells used school buses. And so, they did find some but they were going to ship them up to Minnesota to get air conditioners installed in them and then ship them back to Louisiana so we could use them. We said, "Why don't you just give us what you think the buses are worth, let us buy new, more modern buses and we'll make up the difference?" But that bureaucracy is prolonging the recovery. When it comes to rebuilding schools, they want to know how many pieces of paper? How many pieces of chalk? How many erasers were destroyed? Don't try to buy an electronic board, we'll build you -- we'll just buy you the

same old chalkboard that was there before. Don't even think about moving the schools because the population has shifted. Now the good news is it's getting better. We did work with the bureaucracy. They've created a pilot program where they identify five schools, they speed-tracked their reconstruction, but part of the message is that there's still bureaucracy in the recovery.

You know, when I go to Congress, yes, we'll need money for levees and wetlands, but my most important request is not for billions of additional dollars, it's to cut through the red tape for the dollars that have already been approved, that haven't been spent on housing, that haven't been spent on health care, that haven't been spent on schools. I think the senator was on target when he criticized the response at all levels and said that things would be different. We need to rewrite the Stafford Act. Maybe it was okay for an isolated

tornado or storm. Clearly, the way it's being interpreted does not adequately respond to a catastrophic event. And, God forbid, that there should ever be another terrorist attack, natural disaster of that scale -- and I hope there isn't, but if there is, we've got to have a much more flexible and nimble response.

You only have to look to the private sector to see some of the things that worked. We literally -- we found one sheriff had lost all of his vehicles. We called up Ford Motor Company. Within hours, they had donated trucks so he could go and rescue people. I talked to that sheriff recently. He's still waiting for the trucks that he was promised by the government; he still hadn't gotten those trucks. Hours after the storm, the private sector was able to deliver those trucks.

In terms of energy prices, you know, we're an energy-producing state. But I will say this. Our country needs a more rational national energy policy. The reason we're so dependent on foreign sources, the reason our economy is so impacted by high energy prices, is we've not had a rational discussion about what we're going to do. And it involves conservation. It involves renewable fuels. We're a big producer of crops like sugarcane and, increasingly, corn. We're -- you know, we're historically a state that grows cotton. But I think we're going more corn than cotton, thanks to the ethanol fuels interest.

We also need to be having a serious discussion about the role that nuclear energy is going to play, other renewable energies are going to play. We have to have a serious discussion about domestic oil and gas production as well. We haven't built a new refinery in this country in decades. I mean, we have large, known, deposits we're not exploring. So as a short term solution, a tax holiday, certainly that's fine, but, for the longer term, we as a country need to have a much more rational conversation about energy policy. And certainly -- and I say that as a state that actually produces much of this country's domestic oil and gas, a state whose treasury is benefiting from high oil and gas prices. We know that this is a finite resource and we need to be having this discussion sooner than later.

MR. HAMRICK: You've been quoted as saying that you want to seize upon the opportunity, and you're saying that again today, in terms of

the opportunity for a reform in your state. And you've also said the worst thing that could happen is you run out of time to do that. How long do you think you have, and do you sense that this change in the political atmosphere in Louisiana is really infused throughout the system and throughout the state?

GOV. JINDAL: Well, hopefully I'll have seven years, 260 days is my goal. My goal is to have seven -- two terms. But the reality is, I tell my Cabinet every day, we'll run out of time before we run out of things to do. There is so much work to be done. And that's not a thing to hear a first-term, first-year governor saying. I can't overstate enough though. The change in Louisiana is not because I got elected. It's not even because we've got these two great leaders, the House and the Senate. It's not even because of term limits and the brand new members in the House and in the Senate. It's not because of that. It's because the people are demanding change.

Several things have happened because of the storms. Yes, we've got billions of dollars of recovery spending. Yes, we've got an energy-based economy that's doing real well. But, you know, we've been through boom cycles before. We had an energy boom in the '70s. We had a boom when Louisiana legalized gambling in the '80s. We had a boom when health care -- federal health care dollars were freely flowing into the state in the '90s. Every boom was followed by a bust.

We have got to use this opportunity differently. We've got to use it responsibly to diversify, to develop our economy, to change our health care, change our educational systems.

This isn't just about spending money or signing checks. And I'll say this, if you want to look for signals that our state has changed, look what happened right after the storms. There was a proposal to reform and consolidate the levee boards. There was a proposal to consolidate the assessors, and the sheriffs' offices in New Orleans.

If you'd gone back five years, and you'd run on that platform. You said, I'm going to consolidate the assessors and the levee boards and the sheriffs, they would have laughed you out of politics. They would have said, where are you from? Don't you realize we just do things differently in New Orleans? It doesn't matter that other 63 parishes have one sheriff. Doesn't matter the other 63 parishes have one assessor. It's just different down here. Don't talk to us about reforming levee boards, we just do things differently down in this part of the state.

Well, the first special session they had, the idea didn't catch on. It wasn't embraced by the political leaders and it didn't happen. Then an amazing thing happened. These civic organizations -- these men and women all across the region, but especially in Southeastern Louisiana, said this is wrong, and we want to do something about this. And they started signing petitions.

And before you knew it, they'd collected tens of thousands of signatures. Now that's not happened in my lifetime that I can remember, in Louisiana, where regular voters -- no political party, no

lobbying groups, no sponsored, subsidized entity, no political group, but regular people got together and said, we got to change this. This is our government. Voting has consequences. The decisions government make have consequences. We've got to change.

They demanded change. They had a second special session. And it was amazing how many politicians decided that wanted to be at the head of this parade. You know, there's a saying in Louisiana, if you see mob marching on city hall, get in front of it and call it a parade.

All of a sudden everybody was taking credit for offering these reforms -- which was a great thing. I hope that we're having fights in Baton Rouge about who can take credit for reform. That's a wonderful thing to happen. It doesn't matter who gets credit, as long as it gets done.

So, I think the political climate has changed. And, yeah, there are term limits. Yeah, there are these new dollars. I think, most importantly, after the storms people realized that we've got one more chance. In our lifetime, it's maybe the best chance we get. If we don't seize this, Louisiana will be a great place to visit (sic).

You'll want to come down there and take your kids -- there's Jazz Fest this week, and you'll want to come see that. You'll want to come down to the Sugar Bowl. Maybe you saw we had the NBA All-Star Game. Maybe your company will send you down to a convention.

But, we've got to seize this opportunity, so you come down and -- not just have a great meal; and not just take a great picture in the French Quarter; and not just go on the bayou tours, and see the plantation homes, and travel all over the state -- we want to seize this opportunity so you say, that's where I want to do business. That's where I want to invest.

You know, this week Albermarle Corporation, a Fortune 1000 company, moved its headquarters from Richmond, Virginia to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It's our fifth Fortune 1000 company now. And when that move happened, it was funny, one of our reporters asked the C.E.O. -- who stood-up there and talked about all the reasons they were coming to Louisiana -- he said, what other cities did we beat?

And the C.E.O. said, well, you know, we really don't want to get into the cities we looked at. That would kind of be disrespectful and rude. He goes, no, no, you don't understand. We're so used to losing these contests, we're so used to people writing: Well, they could have come to Louisiana and they didn't. We just want to know who we beat this time.

And that's how excited people are. I predict for you that Tidewater; I predict for you the shipyard in Terrebonne; I predict for you that Albamarle -- these are just the first of many companies that will expand, move and come to Louisiana.

MR. HAMRICK: There is a follow-up question to your statement about the national energy policy. Well, what policy would you like to see in place?

GOV. JINDAL: Well, you know, I think we've got to realize there's no silver bullet. There's no one solution. People that think, well, if we just drill more, that'll solve all of our problems. That alone is not going to do it.

If we just build more nuclear facilities, the way they have in France and Japan, that alone is not going to do it. If we just do conservation, and have tax credits for more energy-efficient building and living, and a more energy efficient economy, that alone is not going to do it -- renewables. If we get smarter and more efficient using the gas, and switchblade grass, and other kinds of renewable sources, in addition to corn and ethanol, that alone is not going to do it.

My point is we've got to do all these things. We got to be smarter about how we use coal. We've got to be smarter about how we use all these different resources. You may see the rapid growth rates in wind and solar energy. For too long we've looked for the easy solution or the silver bullet, thinking there was just one thing -- if we just had one -- (inaudible) -- that would solve all the problems, it's not.

We have to have a diversified energy portfolio. It's better for our economy, it's better for the environment, it's better for national security. We're doing that in Louisiana. For years we've put too many of our eggs in the natural gas basket. We also have nuclear energy. We're diversifying our energy portfolio. It's increasingly important to the environment. It's important for economic development as well.

A year ago, under my predecessor, there was a steel plant thinking about coming to Alabama or Louisiana. They chose Alabama, in part, because they had -- they were able to afford and provide cheaper energy. We need a national policy that recognizes there's no silver bullet.

But let's also realize this: There will be winners and losers as we adopt new policies. And we need to be sensitive to that. Because there will be people that are economically disadvantaged, that will be -- if we just move quickly to new policies, it wouldn't be fair to go to parts of the country that have invested in natural gas plants, or coal-based plants, or whatever, and unfairly make them shoulder those burdens.

A rational energy policy says, as a country, we benefit from having more diverse energy resources. But I would argue we need to do all those things I listed: More domestic production, more conservation, more renewable sources. We need to be doing all those things, not just one of those steps, to break -- to break the cycle we're trapped in today.

MR. HAMRICK: Well, are you, in a sense, reliant, very significantly, in your state, on the revenues that oil necessarily creates, and then, therefore, diversification presents a great risk to your state?

GOV. JINDAL: You know, we are not nearly -- certainly, oil and gas economy's been good for Louisiana. Make no mistake about it. There's still a tremendous amount of activity. But, our economy is much more diversified than it was during the last oil bust.

The reality is that there have been Constitutional mechanisms put in place, for example, in our budget. Excess mineral revenues are routinely deposited in a stabilization fund so that our budget doesn't grow dramatically -- oil revenues are in decline dramatically.

Right now, for example, our budget is built on oil-barrel cost assumptions of about \$80 a barrel. And we actually built in our budget forecast that that they were going to decline down closer to -- in the \$50 range. Those are the budget assumptions we make to prevent ourselves from becoming overly dependent on oil revenues.

But, the bigger point is this: We appreciate the role that energy plays in our economy, especially as it's becoming more high tech; you're seeing more deepwater production; and you're seeing our service industries service the industry even overseas.

At the same time -- at the same time we're realizing we've got to diversify outside of just oil and gas. We've made significant investments in ethanol and renewable energies. There are entrepreneurs that want to look at using the waterways -- off Louisiana's coast and on the river, to generate energy. There are entrepreneurs that want to look at our off-shore platforms to use those for wind energy.

But, we're even moving beyond energy. In that second special session we invested \$50 million in the Pennington research institute, one of the nation's foremost institutes when it comes to diabetes and nutrition research. Louisiana does \$100 million a year -- \$100 a year of externally-funded health research.

We want to double and quadruple that so we can actually come close to meeting -- Birmingham, Alabama does \$200 million; Houston, Texas does \$400 million. They're doing more than our entire state put together. There's an area where we can have rapid growth. We have a Cancer Consortium where L.S.U. and Tulane are working together. We want to get that NCI certified.

And so we're making investments in other areas to diversify our economy, but we're also -- we know that government can't be the solution. We're removing obstacles by getting rid of taxes that have been an obstacle, revamping our educational policies so businesses will look to Louisiana as an opportunity to invest and expand even outside of the oil and gas industries. And increasingly we're seeing that happening.

MR. HAMRICK: Obviously, you're at the National Press Club today, and we like to engage in some self-examination of the news media. Give the national media a letter grade for its coverage of Katrina.

GOV. JINDAL: You know, one of the things -- and I want to, first of all, thank the media for their extended coverage of the region. And that may sound like a trivial thing, but it is so important for

us. When the media comes down for Mardi Gras and Jazz Fest, when you come down for the Katrina and Rita anniversaries, when you come down to cover those stories, why is that important?

Well, it's important because we want the country to see two things: On one hand, we want to see that -- we want them to see we're recovering. You know, I was talking to a C.E.O. in New York again last year and he asked me, is it safe to drive down there? Are you all still under water?

(Laughter.)

I said, it's been two years after the storm. I mean -- and he was, he was a relatively informed individual. We want the country to see it is perfectly safe to come down there. You can fly down to the airport, stay in the hotels, go to the convention center, you can go to work. There are many, many areas that are doing extremely well.

On the other hand, we also want the message to get out that we still have ongoing needs. It's a double-edged sword. We don't want people just to go to the tourist areas and say, well, everything's fine, everything's done. It's a double-edged sword. We want people to also see we've got on-going reconstruction needs.

In terms of the media coverage, in the first days there was a lot of sensational reporting. And I don't blame the media for that, there just wasn't good communication, so it wasn't always accurate information coming out from those areas impacted but the storms. It was impossible to get completely accurate information.

The first hours, people -- even at the core, were denying there had been a breach. And so, for some time, people were saying, no, the levees haven't breached. The storm's passed. Everything's fine. Look, everything's sunny. Everything's clear. You know, we missed the big one. The first reports were, New Orleans had missed the big storm, it wasn't as bad as people thought. Then, afterwards there was more coverage. They said, wait a minute, water's coming into the city.

And then the coverage -- and, again, it wasn't -- I don't think it was the media's fault, I think there just wasn't accurate information all the time coming out.

There was a lot of sensational coverage about -- exaggerations. The reality was awful enough, and so the exaggerations added to a sense of panic and fear of awful atrocities being committed, many of which did not turn out to be true. Some of which did, but many of which did not turn out to be true.

In terms of going forward, what we think is helpful is to come down -- it's a complex story. It'd be very easy to go take a picture of the lower Ninth Ward and show ruined homes and say boy, the country's forgotten you. Almost nothing's changed. It'd be very easy to go take a different picture down in the central business district, to the French Quarter, and say traffic is bustling; shops are being renovated, hotels are being opened. Business is great. It'd be very

simple just to come, fly into New Orleans, do the story and leave. It's a lot more complicated to go St. Bernard Parish, Plaquemines Parish, Cameron Parish.

So I really have two messages for the national media. One is thank you, and I mean that sincerely. The continued coverage is extremely important to the people of Louisiana.

But secondly, I would say my suggestion, my request would be realize it's a complicated story. It's a lot easier to want to come down and say they're all better or they're not all better. The reality is somewhere in between, and the storms hit a lot more than New Orleans.

New Orleans gets a lot of the attention. The reality is there were two storms. Rita hit as well, and there many other communities that suffered extreme damage and also lost lives and also lost property. But overall -- but overall, I'm very grateful for the press getting this message out and for telling the good news stories as well, so people can see that there is a recovery going on and that we are grateful for the help that we've received.

MR. HAMRICK: Two other recovery-related questions. They're both in the same area. One's -- can you talk about plans to expand the levee system in New Orleans in the short term and long term? And also the related question with that one is what about hurricane preparation as the season approaches? And secondarily, do you see projects in large-scale restoration of coastal wetlands to, perhaps, mitigate effects of future hurricanes?

GOV. JINDAL: Thank you. Both excellent and very, very important questions.

Several things I want to show you about the levees and the wetlands. I want to clear up a lot of misconceptions. The reality is Katrina was not the doomsday scenario. It wasn't the Category 5 storm that was a direct hit on New Orleans.

The reality is if the federally built levees had done what they supposed to do, Katrina would have been an awful storm. A lot of people would still have lost their lives; a lot of homes would have been destroyed. But it wouldn't be the main story we'd be talking about two and a half years later.

Because the reality is if the levees had done what they were supposed to do, if the right soil had been used, if the steel pilings had been deep enough, the storm would have come in and caused a lot of damage in St. Bernard, Plaquemines Parish and a lot of areas. But if those floodwalls had held, most of the city wouldn't have flooded. Most of the people would have been fine. Their homes -- they would have evacuated, they would have come back home, as they've done time after time, and they would have gone on with their normal lives.

So the first point that I think is so important for people to understand, this isn't because New Orleans was built in a certain place or built a certain way. It's because the floodwalls -- the government had told people it's safe to build here. It's safe. You

can get insurance here. You can get mortgages here. And when the floodwalls didn't do what they were supposed to do, water came in many place where it'd never been before. People have lived there for generations and never had trouble with flooding or with storm damage. But because the floodwalls didn't do what they were supposed to, a lot of people were stunned when they lost their homes, and many of them lost their lives.

The second point. We're very grateful to Congress and the president. You may remember he came to Jackson Square, stood in front of the cameras and said we will do what it takes to rebuild this great city. And we're very grateful for that commitment. I think the government's --

I'm a conservative. I don't think government should do everything for people or do everything -- they can do for themselves. But one of our government's foremost and most sacred obligations is to keep her people safe. And so keeping the people safe in Louisiana meant making sure that they could go home and be safe. That if there was another storm, this wasn't going to happen again. It'd be foolish to encourage people to rebuild if you weren't going to do something different than what had happened last time to build better levees. So the president, the Congress, the country made a commitment that would build the levees the way they were supposed to have been built the first time.

You know, a lot of times you'll hear the Corps tell you, well, the levees are safer than they were before Katrina. I don't know how encouraging -- now, that's great, but that doesn't do me a -- doesn't make me feel a whole lot better.

Instead, they said you know what? These levees were authorized to protect against a one-in-a-hundred-year storm. Hundred-year flood protection is what they call it. So they came and made the commitment they were going to get that done by 2011. Now, the monies in the president's budget, it's been proposed. One thing we'd ask, we'd like that money to be approved sooner than later. Why is that important?

The Corps has said if it doesn't get approved sooner that they may not make the 2011 deadline. And I don't know about you; this is a political year in Washington. I've seen these years come and go. Not a whole lot of appropriations bills are going to get done this year.

Now, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe they'll get their appropriations done by October 1st and will surprise everybody, but I wouldn't bet on it. Actually, I'd bet against it. (Scattered laughter.) The reality is I'm pretty sure there'll be an Iraq supplemental bill, and beyond that, I'm not sure how many other appropriations bills are getting done. So we're very interested.

I've sent a letter to the speaker of the House, the majority leader in the Senate, as well as the chairmen of the committees saying that the money is in the president's budget. All that we ask is that it be approved sooner than later, so the Corps can meet their own deadline. Let's not tell the people of south Louisiana you've got to wait through another additional hurricane season before we rebuild

these levees properly.

But there was also a question about wetlands protection, and this is so important. You can build all the levees in the world. The reality is we need healthy wetlands to keep our people safe. Why is that so important?

Louisiana loses 30 miles a year off our coast to coastal erosion. 2005 we lost 200 miles. Every couple of miles of healthy wetlands reduces tidal surge by a foot. So a lot of people that survived the '65 storms are looking around saying wait a minute. I don't remember the storms coming with this kind of intensity and fury into my neighborhood. And the reason is they're now closer to the water than they ever were before, because we continue to lose our coast.

Why is that happening? Well, there are several reasons. One is that after the floods in '27, the Corps built levees up and down the Mississippi River all throughout the country to make sure that our country doesn't flood. That means all that silt and freshwater that replenishes the wetlands is now being dumped in the Outer Continental Shelf, not replenishing the wetlands the way it's supposed to.

The Corps, when they dredge navigational canals, they won't spend a couple of extra bucks to do the directional dredging to put that material in the wetlands. Instead, they're dumping it out in the Gulf where it doesn't do any good.

You have navigational canals that have been carved through the wetlands for oil and gas and other reasons, so you've got saltwater intrusion into what are freshwater wetlands, destroying those wetlands.

So here's the problem. Strong levees are great, but you can't build a Great Wall of China to keep water out of your city. It just doesn't work. You need healthy wetlands. Those are like nature's speed bumps to slow down the hurricanes, to absorb the tidal surge, to absorb that energy. And they've always worked, and that's the best defense, with levees, to keep our people safe.

Now, the state of Louisiana put up this year \$300 million, \$200 million last year. That's more money than we've ever been put up before. We're actually ahead of the federal government. We're not waiting for them. We've actually gone ahead and we pre-funded these different federal projects so we can begin to restore these wetlands so our people can be safe.

But this is going to take a national commitment. Remember I told you, this was the nation's estuaries. These are the nation's wetlands. This is the nation's fisheries. You can be for this because you're an environmentalist, and you care about fishing and birds and habitats.

You can be for this because you want to reduce the dead zone off the Gulf. You can be for this because you're interested in domestic oil and gas, and you know that if you're not getting it off Louisiana's coast, it's going to be much harder to get it anywhere else, off of anybody else's coast in the country.

You can be for this because you don't want to spend hundreds of billions of dollars the next time there's a storm. You can be for this because you want people to be safe. My point is just we've all got to be for this.

Our country is rebuilding and cleaning up the Everglades and the Chesapeake. I would argue that America's wetlands also deserves to be a national priority, a national commitment. It's extremely important.

I want to -- in terms of hurricane preparation, the state has invested its own money. We put up, in our budget, \$20 million this year to give interoperable communications, to give radios, to give equipment to local first responders and others so everybody can be on the same wavelength, everybody can be talking to each other.

We're building shelters at state expense out of the coastal areas so people can be evacuated. We've got three-season leases with buses and vehicles so that we can call people to come and evacuate. We've audited the health care facilities, the nursing homes, the hospitals, to make sure they've got legitimate evacuation plans.

We've got push technology. We can call every home or targeted homes in the state and cell phones telling people it's time to evacuate. This is what you need to do. Several improvements have been made in terms of evacuation.

But I will say this. The government can do a lot, but the storms remind us of one very important lesson. Ultimately the government can do a lot to help us, and especially for the elderly and infirm and others, they'll need help -- certainly those who can't themselves. But ultimately families also have a responsibility.

One of the things is that I'm doing PSAs and radio ads and we go across the state telling people -- we had high water recently. We didn't flood, except for a few isolated areas in Louisiana. But we told people it's not too early to have bottled water and food and your medications and an evacuation plan and an idea of where you would go if a storm would happen.

And I don't want to scare people. It's not like hurricanes happen every year in Louisiana. In my lifetime, this was the first time we'd had such a devastating hurricane.

I was in California earlier this week, checked in the hotel. They had a card saying in case of an earthquake, this is what you do. In case of an earthquake? What can you do in case of an earthquake? Every part of the country, there's -- in case of a wildfire, in case of mudslides. So every part of the country has got its own challenges.

But I think one of the messages for the country is, whether it's manmade or whether it's a natural disaster or attack, we as American families have to have some responsibility for ourselves. We need to have a plan. We need to think about this before it happens. It's too late in the middle of a storm to then wonder how am I going to get fresh water? How am I going to get diapers for my child? How am I

going to get food?

Now, look, the state's going to do its part. For those people that can't move, those people that don't move, we're going to do everything we can. But I can't emphasize enough the vast majority of people in Katrina evacuated themselves. The vast majority of people have to know, have to understand there's a personal responsibility when it comes to evacuation preparedness as well.

MR. HAMRICK: Okay, Governor. We're almost out of time, and before we ask the final question of the day, one of the very important matters we have to take care of, and that is to present you with a memento of today's visit. This is the centennial coffee mug featuring Press Club member Eric Severeid. So thank you very much.

GOV. JINDAL: Well, I -- (applause.)

MR. HAMRICK: One more question.

GOV. JINDAL: Sure. Thanks to our tough ethics rules, I won't be accepting this personally. I'll be donating this to the state. So if you come to the governor's mansion, you'll see this sitting in the mansion long after I'm gone. I just want you to know that. (Laughter.)

MR. HAMRICK: Very good. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

You were not given the name Bobby by your parents. Can you tell the story how it came to be your name, and have you had any second thoughts?

GOV. JINDAL: (Laughs.) No, I was not given the name Bobby. My mom went to go pick me up from school, and the teacher said your son's got a brand new name. She said what are you talking about? I was four years old at the time. And she said -- apparently I'd showed up at school one day and told all my friends that I wanted to be called Bobby, after my favorite character on TV. I was a child of the '70s, and watched The Brady Bunch, growing up. (Laughter.) And at that age, Bobby Brady was the youngest. I could identify with him the most.

I don't have any second thoughts, because right after The Brady Bunch, when I was growing up in repeats, was Gilligan's Island. And I don't think, as progressive as the people of Louisiana are, I don't think they were ready for a Gilligan as their next governor. (Laughter.) So I'm very happy I picked Bobby.

I will say, in final closing, I want to thank you for hosting me here. You know, we in New Orleans, we in Louisiana are making an effort to invite the different candidates to come down and consider doing a discussion, a forum, a debate if they want to call it that.

Various media are sponsoring that, or supporting that. We thank you for your interest. We think it'd be great for the country to have a discussion in New Orleans about the recovery issues, about the challenges ahead.

Thank you for your attention. Thank you for your concern. If you remember just two things from what I've said, one, thank you for your generosity for the state of Louisiana. Know it's a new day in Louisiana. We want you to come invest, create jobs in our state.

Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

MR. HAMRICK: I'd like to thank everyone for coming here today. I'd also like to thank National Press Club staff members Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, Joann Booze, and Howard Rothman for organizing today's luncheon. Also, thanks to the NPC library for its research.

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Thank you, and we're adjourned. (Strikes gavel.)

(Applause.)

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