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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Christmas Cancelled for LA Healthcare, Higher Education**

Three days before Christmas, Governor Jindal issued an executive order instructing agency heads to implement an across-the-board reduction of \$247.9 million, including \$108 million from the Department of Health and Hospitals and \$14 million from the Department of Social Services.

These cuts come at a time when many department budgets, particularly those in human services and higher education, have already experienced significant reductions. As the Louisiana Budget Project has noted repeatedly in recent months, the magnitude of Louisiana's fiscal crisis requires a more balanced approach to solving what is, in reality, a *revenue crisis*.

Commissioner of Administration Angele Davis has voiced opposition to across-the-board cuts, saying she did not want to "thin the soup," according to a report in the December 5, 2008, Baton Rouge Advocate. Davis noted that such cuts would remove the meat from state government programs and that Louisiana needed to be more strategic in deciding which programs to cut.

For his part, Governor Jindal has stated that every option is on the table to solve this crisis. Evidently he means every option except reclaiming the \$6.5 billion in lost revenue from existing tax breaks.

"No new taxes" is a great sound-bite, but in these economically troubled times, the needs of Louisiana citizens trump popular rhetoric. The state must find affordable ways to expand services, not cut them.

It can do this through a balanced approach that combines strategic cuts with closing tax loopholes that benefit corporations and our wealthiest



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citizens. This approach would bring Louisiana in line with other states that have managed both to raise revenue and cut spending.

Louisiana Budget Project is a project of the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations. The Louisiana Budget Project monitors and reports on state government spending and how it affects Louisiana's low- to moderate-income families.