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Teachers unions, Louisiana Budget Project oppose extension of tax breaks for businesses

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By Times-Picayune Staff

The state's two largest teachers unions and a budget watchdog group have come out against Gov. **Bobby Jindal's** plans to seek extensions of several business-friendly tax breaks that are due to expire in the months ahead.


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Brett Duke, The Times-Picayune archive

Gov. Bobby Jindal addresses the combined House and Senate to open the 2010 legislative session.

Jindal said last week that he wants the Legislature to continue the state's Quality Jobs Program, which provides tax rebates for companies that create new jobs that meet specific wage and benefit levels and is scheduled to sunset at the end of the year. He also wants to extend tax credits for companies that conduct research and development in Louisiana, firms that commercialize technology developed at Louisiana colleges, and digital media developers. Jindal said the tax breaks are "critical tools to ensure that we ... have the ability to remain economically competitive."

But the Louisiana Federation of Teachers said the proposal sends the wrong message

in a week when Jindal also announced that financing for public schools would be frozen next year. The Louisiana Association of Educators and the Louisiana Budget Project also weighed in against the plan. "Because schools' costs go up each year, a freeze is, in effect, a cut," LBP director Edward Ashworth said. The group has called for a broad review of more than 440 tax breaks that are already on the books.

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