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Sent: Wednesday, October 08, 2014 10:32 AM
To: WBRZ
Subject: Governor Bobby Jindal Issues Executive Order to Protect Teachers' Right to Freedom of Speech

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State of Louisiana
Office of the Governor
GOVERNOR BOBBY JINDAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 8, 2014
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Governor Bobby Jindal Issues Executive Order to Protect Teachers' Right to Freedom of Speech

BATON ROUGE – Today, Governor Bobby Jindal issued an Executive Order to protect freedom of speech and the rights of teachers. The Executive Order was issued after recent reports surfaced in *The Alexandria Town Talk* about teachers who were quieted by local school officials after voicing concerns over Common Core.

In a story published in *The Alexandria Town Talk*, entitled *Educators feeling pressure 'from top on down,'* a teacher said she was “written up” by school administrators for writing a comment from her personal Facebook account about the Common Core. The comment criticized Common Core.

According to the story, the teacher said she was “shocked” about being asked to remove her comment. The teacher removed her comment and she was then “written up” by the school administration.

The story quotes the teacher as saying, “We are not to voice our opinions in any public forum...We are to be neutral or in favor of...This is a hot national debate. Why can't I comment? I did not say a word about anything locally.”

Another teacher said there is a “climate of fear” in her school district and said “teachers have been told not to talk to the press without going through the chain of command, which begins with the principal and ends with the superintendent.”

[See the entire Town Talk story here.](#)

EXECUTIVE ORDER BJ 2014-12**FREEDOM OF SPEECH PROTECTIONS FOR LOUISIANA TEACHERS**

WHEREAS, the United States Constitution and the Louisiana Constitution guarantee to every individual the freedom of speech and protection from government abridgment of that right;

WHEREAS, this same freedom and protection under the law extends to every teacher in every classroom across the state of Louisiana;

WHEREAS, teachers are the backbone of Louisiana's educational system and offer a necessary voice in the ongoing discussions regarding classroom curriculum and testing procedures and must be afforded the opportunity to offer this crucial perspective;

WHEREAS, in 2008, the Governor made part of his legislative package and signed into law Act No. 155 of the 2008 Legislative Session, expanding the Teacher's Bill of Rights to further the rights guaranteed to teachers, to strengthen immunity from legal retaliation, and to provide awareness of these rights to the education profession, the community, parents and students; and

WHEREAS, teachers must continue to work in an environment where they are able to speak freely and to provide public awareness of issues with curriculum and testing materials encountered in the classroom, free from punitive remedies and in accordance with their commitment to the education of the children of Louisiana, and as guaranteed by the United States Constitution, the Louisiana Constitution, and other laws of this state.

NOW THEREFORE, I, BOBBY JINDAL, Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:

SECTION 1: As part of the ongoing discussion among state and local education officials, teachers, parents, and stakeholders regarding classroom curriculum and testing, and as part of the larger discussion of the quality of Louisiana's educational system, legal guarantees afforded to all citizens shall be maintained and provided to teachers;

SECTION 2: State and local school administration officials are not authorized under the existing laws of this state to deny a teacher's constitutional freedom of speech in order to stifle the discussion and debate surrounding curriculum and standardized assessments by teachers.

SECTION 3: All departments, commissions, boards, agencies, and political subdivisions of the state are authorized and directed to cooperate with the implementations of the provisions of this Order.

SECTION 4: This Order is effective upon signature and shall remain in effect until amended, modified, terminated or rescinded.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana, at the Capitol, in the city of Baton Rouge, on this 6th day of October, 2014.

/s/ Bobby Jindal

GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA

**ATTEST BY
THE GOVERNOR**

/s/ Tom Schedler
SECRETARY OF STATE

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