



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 30, 2006
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**HEALTH CARE REFORM IS NUMBER ONE PRIORITY
FOR THE 2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA ---Facing a staggering crisis in health care, the Louisiana Republican Legislative Delegation announces health care reform as its number one priority for the 2006 regular session.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have exacerbated a bad pre-storm situation to the point of crisis in the Health Care delivery systems across Louisiana.

“Louisiana can no longer afford to provide 21st century health care using a 1930’s delivery system,” said Rep. Jim Tucker. “Uncompensated care in hospitals across the state is killing our hospitals, doctors and other providers of healthcare services.” To remedy this situation is complicated and detailed. The Republican Delegation has filed or will file legislation on the following health care issues in the session:

- 1) Immediately change the payment mechanisms to allow Uncompensated Care Payments to follow the patient to community hospitals, doctors and other providers.
- 2) A seven-year plan to transform state-run health care delivery systems to the private sector by converting existing facilities into Federal Qualified Health Centers and allowing Medicaid dollars to follow the patient to their hospital of choice. “It’s past time Louisiana join the other 49 states in a more cost effective way to deliver healthcare,” said Sen. Tom Schedler.
- 3) Focus rebuilding efforts on medical education. We urge the Governor and DHH to properly fund and account for medical education in Louisiana. It is time to separate education from hospital operations. Let’s stop talking and start acting to improve medical education in Louisiana.
- 4) Republicans embrace a small university hospital concept in New Orleans along with research facilities to support and develop a strong medical education community. We are opposed to rebuilding a mega-Charity Hospital. Louisiana does not need to be in the hospital building business; it needs to educate students.

Bills in the package by Senators Schedler and Dardenne and Representatives Scalise, Crowe, Walsworth

OTHER ISSUES ON OUR AGENDA

- 1) Support Consolidation of Local Government in New Orleans including:

The consolidation of Orleans Parish district and juvenile courts, clerks, sheriffs, and other judicial officials and officers of Orleans parish. HB 514 by Bruneau

The consolidation of Orleans Parish assessors and their offices. HB 656 and 642 by Badon and SB 271 by Mount
- 2) Support the private property rights of Louisiana Citizens. The Delegation will support legislation prohibiting the taking of property in certain circumstances. HB 28 by Bruneau
- 3) Oppose any change to TOPS. (See the attached press release and poll released today.)
- 4) Republicans will continue to fight to make sure CDBG funds go to the people devastated by both Katrina and Rita and not into administration and bureaucracy. We will continue to oppose the approval of the recovery centers and oppose the expenditure of 5% of the CDBG funds for administrative bureaucratic cost.

The delegation will continue to take positions on other issues as the session develops. The Teacher Pay proposal for example has support from many of our members, but we will wait until the Revenue Estimating Conference meets again before taking an official position.

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