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December 30, 2013

The Honorable Bobby Jindal
Governor, State of Louisiana
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9004

RE: Annual Report – Louisiana Commission on Marriage and Family

Dear Governor Jindal:

Due to Senator Broome's resignation from the Commission, I am submitting the Annual Report on the Commission's behalf. The Louisiana Commission on Marriage and Family was reestablished by Executive Order BJ 2008-50 whose aim is to research, identify, and provide strategies to strengthen the families of Louisiana. Enclosed is a copy of the commission's annual report as required by the above mentioned executive order. The report provides a brief history of the commission and goals/plans of action by the commission's sub-committees for 2013.

If you would like further information, please contact me at (337) 781-6643.

Sincerely,

Heather L. Doss
Louisiana Commission on Marriage and Family

Enclosure



LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

PRE/POST MARRIAGE EDUCATION INITIATIVES SUBCOMMITTEE

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

The primary objective of the Pre/Post Marriage Education Initiatives Subcommittee (“Subcommittee”) of the Louisiana Commission on Marriage and Family (“Commission”) is to advise the Commission and ultimately the Governor on ideas, best practices, and means to encourage stable marriages and to increase understanding among Louisiana residents of the benefits and virtues of the same. These efforts of the Subcommittee help to fulfill, in part, the specific duties assigned to the Commission by Executive Order BJ 08-50, Section 2, which includes the following relevant provisions:

- C. Propose and analyze initiatives, programs, policies, and/or incentives that encourage and support the institution of marriage;
- D. Propose and analyze programs, policies, curriculums, and/or initiatives, especially those that may be funded with Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (“TANF”) funds, which encourage the formation of two-parent families, prevent and/or reduce the incidence of single-parent births, strengthen existing marriages that are in jeopardy, encourage postponing child-bearing until after both parents have attained a postsecondary education and/or post-secondary technical/job training; promote responsible fatherhood, and/or motivate fathers to be continuously involved in and supportive of their children and/or families;
- E. Propose and analyze programs, policies, curriculums, and/or community-based partnerships that may be utilized and/or developed to strengthen families and teach marriage skills, anger/conflict management skills, money management skills, parenting skills, and/or about the differences in communication styles and emotional needs between men and women in marriage; and
- F. Analyze the policy considerations and issues involved in encouraging and/or requiring counseling and/or mediation prior to divorce and providing such counseling and/or mediation with public funds.

The Subcommittee believes that failed marriages, increasing cohabitation rates, and the breakdown of the family are root causes of countless societal ills, and that marriage education endeavors are an important component of improving the state’s outcomes and enhancing the quality of life for all Louisiana citizens. As stated in Executive Order BJ 08-50, “due to divorce

and single-parent births, twenty-three million children in the United States are disadvantaged from growing up in a household without both their parents, including forty-nine percent (49%) of the children born in the state of Louisiana and sixty-eight percent (68%) born in the Parish of Orleans to single parents in 2004.” The 2010 U.S. Census and other current data reveal more alarming statistics with regard to the stability of the institutions of marriage and family in America and in our state.

Nationally, roughly fifty percent (54%) of marriages now end in divorce, and America’s divorce rate is the *highest* in the civilized world. By way of comparison, our divorce rate is twice the rate of France and Germany, and three times that of Japan. For the first time, the percentage of adults who are married has fallen below half of all U.S. households. The 2010 Census reports only forty-eight percent (48%) of U.S. adults are married today, versus seventy-eight percent (78%) in 1950. The marriage rate in America has plunged fifty percent (50%) since 1970, and one million American children have suffered from divorce every year since 1972. Only one third of American children now grow up in a stable, two parent, married household. The 2010 Census confirms that Louisiana’s divorce rate is approximately fifty percent (50%).

Meanwhile, cohabitation has increased nationwide from 430,000 persons in 1960 to 7.5 million in 2010. In Louisiana, fifty-eight percent (58%) of couples living together are not married. That figure represents the *highest* rate of cohabitation in the country.

The Subcommittee did not meet in 2013. It is our objective in 2014 to coordinate member schedules in a manner that allows our Subcommittee to continue efforts in offering and implementing solutions to the issues identified above.