

# EXECUTIVE ORDER

## BJ 08-50

### Louisiana Commission on Marriage and Family

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**WHEREAS**, marriage is more than a civil contract which transforms the contracting of man and woman into a legally and publicly recognized partnership, as it is also a special form of social and legal dependence entered for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family;

**WHEREAS**, studies reveal that societal benefits result from marriage and two-parent families, as married men and women live longer, are often healthier, are less depressed, and have fewer heart attacks, diseases, and alcohol related problems than unmarried men and women and, as compared to children born to single and/or of divorced parents, children growing up in two-parent families are more likely to graduate from high school, less likely to have behavioral or emotional problems, less likely to be suspended or expelled from or drop out of school, less likely to contract childhood diseases and/or die, and boys are less likely to use drugs or alcohol or commit suicide, while girls are less likely to become sexually active at an early age;

**WHEREAS**, children growing up in two-parent families usually have an advantage over children with singleparents from their access to both parents for emotional, educational, spiritual, and moral support, additional family time, and reinforcement of discipline and family values;

**WHEREAS**, 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 (68%) born in the parish of Orleans to single parents in 2004;

**WHEREAS**, the future of the state of Louisiana is inextricably tied to the physical, intellectual, emotional, and moral growth of the children of this state and their future; and

**WHEREAS**, the interests of the citizens of the state of Louisiana will be best served by the continuation of the Louisiana Commission on Marriage and Family charged with the duty of advising the governor on the means to improve the social and personal well-being of the people of this state, especially the children, by strengthening marriages and/or family units and reducing the incidence of single-parenting;

**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:** The Louisiana Commission on Marriage and Family (hereafter “Commission”) is reestablished within the executive department, Office of the Governor.

**SECTION 2:** The duties of the Commission shall be as follows:

- A. Collect and analyze data on the social and personal effects of marriage, two-parent childrearing, and single-parent child-rearing, within the state of Louisiana;
- B. Review and analyze all laws, rules and regulations, programs and/or policies of the state of Louisiana and/or any of the departments, commissions, boards, agencies, and/or offices in the executive branch thereof, which pertain to taxes, public assistance or benefits, education, childcare and/or public services, for neutrality regarding the institution of marriage so that marriage is not discouraged, discriminated against and/or undermined;
- 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.

**SECTION 3:** Commencing December 31, 2008, and each December 31 thereafter, the Commission shall submit a detailed annual report to the governor which addresses the issues set forth in Section 2 of this Order.

**SECTION 4:** The Commission shall be composed of a maximum of twenty-nine (29) members who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor. The membership of the Commission shall be selected as follows:

- A. The governor, or the governor’s designee;
- B. The secretary of the Department of Social Services, or the secretary’s designee;

- C. The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals, or the secretary's designee;
- D. The secretary of the Department of Labor, or the secretary's designee;
- E. The commissioner of higher education, or the commissioner's designee;
- F. The superintendent of the Department of Education, or the superintendent's designee;
- G. The executive director of the Children's Cabinet, Office of the Governor, or the executive director's designee;
- H. The executive director of the Office on Women's Policy, Office of the Governor, or the executive director's designee;
- I. The director of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), Office of the Commissioner, Division of Administration;
- J. Two (2) members of the Louisiana State Senate, nominated by the president of the Senate;
- K. Two (2) members of the House of Representatives, nominated by the speaker of the House of Representatives;
- L. A representative of the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission;
- M. A member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education;
- N. A citizen of the state of Louisiana representing the interests and concerns of two-parent families;
- O. A citizen of the state of Louisiana representing the interests and concerns of single-parent families; and
- P. Twelve (12) citizens of the state of Louisiana who have significant academic and/or professional expertise in one (1) or more of the following areas:
  - 1. Marriage education and/or marriage skills training;
  - 2. Marriage, family and/or juvenile counseling and/or mediation;
  - 3. Education;
  - 4. Law;
  - 5. Public health;
  - 6. Sociology, social science, and/or social work; and

7. Community programs and/or assistance.

**SECTION 5:** The governor shall appoint the chair of the Commission from its membership. All other officers, if any, shall be elected by the members of the Commission from its membership.

**SECTION 6:** The Commission shall meet at regularly scheduled intervals and at the call of the chair.

**SECTION 7:**

A. Commission members shall not receive additional compensation or a per diem from the Office of the Governor for serving on the Commission.

B. Commission members who are employees or elected public officials of the state of Louisiana or a political subdivision thereof may seek reimbursement of travel expenses, in accordance with PPM 49, from their employing and/or elected department, agency and/or office.

C. Commission members who are also members of the Louisiana Legislature may seek a per diem from the Louisiana State Senate or House of Representatives, as appropriate, for their attendance.

**SECTION 8:** Support staff, facilities, and resources for the Commission shall be provided by the Department of Social Services.

**SECTION 9:** All departments, commissions, boards, offices, entities, agencies, and officers of the state of Louisiana, or any political subdivision thereof, are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Commission in implementing the provisions of this Order.

**SECTION 10:** This Order is effective upon signature and shall continue in effect until amended, modified, terminated, or rescinded by the governor, or terminated by operation of law.

**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 22nd day of August, 2008.

Bobby Jindal  
Governor

ATTEST BY  
THE GOVERNOR  
Jay Dardenne  
Secretary of State