

```
#content_area {width:640px;margin:0 20px 0 0 !important;margin:0 18px 0 0;padding:10px 0 0;}
#center_inside_content{width:640px;margin:0;padding:0;} #right_ad_inside{margin:0;padding:5px 0
0;float:left;} #mini-carousel{margin:0;} #bottom_space{margin:0;}
```

Jindal trip raises ethics queries

Koch Industries paid part of cost

- By [MARSHA SHULER](#)
- Advocate Capitol News Bureau
- Published: Oct 16, 2008 - Page: 1A - UPDATED: 12:05 a.m.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Shortly after being sworn in, Gov. Bobby Jindal took a trip to California that was paid in part by Koch Industries — a private U.S. company whose founder helped start the conservative John Birch Society and whose Louisiana holdings have been granted tax credits by state government.

A top Jindal aide describes the Jan. 27 trip as a campaign-related event. Jindal was sworn in as governor on Jan. 14.

A Jindal office news release at the time touted the trip as the new governor meeting with high-level business executives about his ethics and tax revamp agenda.

There are state ethics laws covering the conduct of public servants as well as their relationships with those that, like Koch, have business ties with the state. Georgia Pacific is among Koch holdings.

State ethics deputy general counsel Kathleen Allen declined to comment specifically on Koch underwriting the trip for Jindal.

However, Allen said, in general, the state ethics law bans the receipt of something of value for performance of governmental duties and responsibilities other than salary and related benefits.

Allen said the question would be whether an individual “is going out there in their official capacity and a third party paying for that travel?”

Another ethics law goes to the issue of “who is paying for it?” Allen said.

“Are they someone who has or is seeking to have a contractual relationship with the person’s agency,” Allen said.

If so, there could be ethics problems, she said.

Koch, one of the nation's largest private companies, bought Georgia Pacific in 2005. The company enjoys Louisiana tax breaks and actively lobbies business issues in the state.

Jindal declined comment after eight requests made over a three-day period to his communications director Melissa Sellers.

Asked specifically to address ethics questions, Sellers said, "It was a campaign-related trip done at the request of donors who wanted him to come speak to this group of business leaders."

Sellers said Jindal spoke at a dinner, then met privately with "donors and prospective donors."

Jindal traveled to Palm Springs, Calif., at Koch's request "to speak about public policy and share his free-market perspective" at a private dinner event, Koch communications director Theresa Johnson said.

Guests included leaders in business and philanthropy from around the country, she said. She provided no specifics on attendees.

Koch Industries has been listed as the largest and second largest private company in the U.S. in recent years. The company deals in oil, gas and the petrochemical industry as well as commodities and financial trading.

Koch and its executives have had close ties to conservative right-wing causes through the years. Its founder Fred Koch helped establish the John Birch Society — a group that according to its Web site favors less government, more responsibility "and — with God's help — a better world."

One of Koch's sons helped establish the Cato Institute, a Washington, D.C., based think-tank which stresses individual liberty, limited government and free market. Another son ran as a Libertarian candidate for president in 1980.

Koch contributed \$2,500 to Jindal's governor's campaign in April 2007 and gave \$212,500 to Louisiana Republican Party committees in October 2007.

Sellers said Koch paid for Jindal's plane ticket from Washington, D.C., where he had attended Mardi Gras festivities and Koch covered food and lodging expenses.

Sellers said she did not know how much Koch spent. She said the expenditures would show up as an "in-kind contribution" to Jindal's governor's campaign on the next report due for filing in February.

Jindal's campaign ended up paying for a charter flight home and part of the trip from D.C. to California because of airplane problems, she said. The charter flight was prompted because of problems getting a commercial flight in time to get to a Chamber of Commerce banquet in Haynesville the next day, she said.

Johnson said she is not sure that Koch paid for a plane ticket.

Sellers said Jindal's campaign fundraiser Allee Bautsch as well as State Police security accompanied him on the trip.

"This was a campaign-related trip done at the request of donors," said Sellers. "Expenses for the trip

should be handled by the campaign. Taxpayers of Louisiana should not be paying for campaign-related events.”

Louisiana taxpayers did pay for Jindal’s State Police security detail — a normal policy.

“I can’t take reimbursement from the campaign,” State Police Col. Mike Edmonson said.

Edmonson said it is State Police responsibility to provide around-the-clock security for the governor and his family. “We have got to be with him,” he said.

One trooper’s expense report for the California trip showed expenditures of \$1,360. It did not cover airplane transportation.

Find this article at:

<http://www.2theadvocate.com/news/31090094.html?showAll=y&c=y>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Copyright © 1992-2008, 2theadvocate.com, WBRZ, Louisiana Broadcasting LLC and The Advocate, Capital City Press LLC, All Rights Reserved.