

# Jindal ending eight-year tenure with low support, but no regrets

By Melinda Deslatte  
The Associated Press

**B**ATON ROUGE, La. — The glimmer on Bobby Jindal has faded for most voters as he wraps up his final days as Louisiana's governor. While the governor has been travelling the state to shine up his eight-year legacy, his tenure appears tarnished by red ink.

The one-time rising Republican star has seen his approval ratings tank, his presidential bid end, and his performance as governor marred by financial decisions that left the state careening from one budget crisis to the next.

Barry Erwin, president of the nonpartisan Council For A Better Louisiana, described Jindal's time in office as "opportunities lost."

"People had huge expectations, perhaps unrealistic expectations. But I think there's a sense, really and truly, that we're emerging in really difficult shape," Erwin said. "I think the accomplishments probably will get overshadowed by the wreck that the budget is in."

As his time in office nears its January 11 end, Jindal, 44, gives no hint of regret, not an inch of second-guessing his choices.

"I've worked as hard as I could for Louisiana," the term-limited governor said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Every single day I did what I thought was right, and I'm comfortable with the decisions I made."

The Ivy League-educated son of Indian immigrants, Jindal made history when he took office in 2008. He was the nation's first elected Indian-American governor and Louisiana's first nonwhite governor since Reconstruction.

He took over a state battered by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, after Democrat Kathleen Blanco — who had defeated Jindal four years earlier — chose not to run for a second term. Expectations



**FINAL DAYS.** Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal stands with an oiled Brown Pelican on the beach at East Grand Terre Island along the Louisiana coast, in this June 3, 2010 file photo. Jindal is finishing his final days as Louisiana's governor. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel, File)

history, and the ballooning costs of tax breaks siphoned money from the treasury. Plummeting oil and gas prices worsened the hit.

Backed by lawmakers, the governor stripped \$700 million in state financing from higher education and chipped away at funding for programs across state government. But he refused to support anything he considered a tax increase and used patchwork maneuvers to pay for government programs.

Jindal defends his management of the state's finances, saying the state received credit upgrades on his watch. He said he decided to grow the private sector economy rather than the government and counts as an achievement the reduction of more than 30,000 state workers.

"I think the approach we took was absolutely right," Jindal said. "We held the line on taxes. We were willing to cut government."

Jindal disagrees with suggestions that budget cuts — or his presidential ambitions — took a toll on his approval ratings with voters, insisting the nosedive is tied to a 2012 education revamp that rankled teacher unions and public school leaders.

But Baton Rouge pollster Bernie Pinsonat, who has tracked the governor's approval ratings, disagrees that education was Jindal's weak spot with voters.

People "didn't think that their governor should not be in the state when we can't afford to fund education and healthcare properly, and it really turned voters off," he said. "The more he travelled, the more he campaigned out of state, the more his popularity fell."

for Jindal soared after his decisive win and a campaign built on reform.

But many now see Jindal as a disappointment. The governor's approval ratings have fallen to 30 percent or less in recent polls.

"When I talked to people, they saw a guy who seemed to be a whole lot more interested in his personal ambitions than he was in them. And I think that's how he's going to be remembered," said term-limited state senator Robert Adley (R-Benton).

"Certainly he has accomplishments. But anytime the public thinks you put yourself above them, everything else goes away," Adley said.

Jindal counts among his biggest achievements the privatization of the LSU charity hospital system; the expansion of charter schools and vouchers; and \$62 billion in economic development wins estimated to create tens of thousands of new jobs.

Immediately after taking office, the governor worked to improve the state's image with an overhaul of ethics laws. He

cut business taxes and revamped worker training programs, and he poured millions into direct incentives to draw companies to Louisiana.

"He's one of the best governors arguably the state's ever had as far as economic development," said lumber company owner Roy O. Martin, a Jindal donor and one of the governor's appointees to the Board of Regents.

Jindal describes his key initiatives in ethics, education, and economic development as aimed at keeping Louisiana's children from having to leave the state to pursue their dreams.

"Eight years ago, the challenge was we were losing our sons and daughters. Now, one of our big challenges is we've got to train enough people to fill these skilled jobs," Jindal said.

But the achievements have been drowned out by constant budget challenges.

When he took office, Jindal inherited a more than \$1 billion state surplus. Then, a national recession, Jindal's backing of the largest individual income-tax cut in state

## China responds to state of Washington request for pandas

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — A group of people backing an initiative to bring pandas to the state of Washington say they are encouraged by a response from Chinese President Xi Jinping expressing interest in loaning a pair of the endangered animals to the state.

The supporters said Xi responded to their letters signed by about 40 state lawmakers asking for the pandas. In his letter, Xi said he has directed his government to explore different options for sending the animals.

Lakewood businessman Ron Chow, who has been working on the issue, says Xi's response is a good sign for Washington's panda proponents. But he says the state still has a long way to go.

Pandas can be seen at four zoos in the U.S., including in San Diego, Atlanta, Memphis, and Washington, D.C.

## Prosecutors say man falsely claimed he created Kung Fu Panda

BOSTON (AP) — A Massachusetts man who claims he first came up with the 2008 animated movie *Kung Fu Panda* is facing federal wire fraud charges for allegedly trying to defraud DreamWorks Animation.

Jayne Gordon pleaded not guilty in Boston federal court to four counts of wire fraud and three counts of perjury. The 51-year-old Randolph, Massachusetts resident was released on an unsecured bond. He's due back in court January 25.

Prosecutors say Gordon fabricated and backdated his sketches and drawings, lied repeatedly during his deposition, and destroyed computer evidence as he tried to further a copyright infringement suit filed in 2011.

Gordon claimed the hit movie was based on a story he'd written called *Panda Power*. He sought \$12 million from the California-based studio.

## Miss Universe show, host apologize for crowning wrong woman

By David Bauder  
AP Television Writer

**N**EW YORK — The Miss Universe pageant and host Steve Harvey doubled down on their apologies after an excruciating live television moment — announcing incorrectly that Miss Colombia had won and then taking the crown from her head to give to a rival from the Philippines.

The fallout from the show made Harvey an online symbol of "oops" moments, drew a reaction from Colombia's president, and even a gloating tweet from Donald Trump, the pageant's former owner.

As televised on Fox, the contest was down to Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo of Colombia and Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach of the Philippines when Harvey, a first-time Miss Universe host, proclaimed Gutierrez the winner after a long dramatic pause.

Music swelled, Gutierrez was fitted for a sash, given flowers, and a crown was placed on her head. That made it two straight Miss Universe winners for Colombia, where the pageants are taken seriously. She bathed in applause for nearly two minutes before Harvey slowly made his way back onto the stage.

"I have to apologize," he said. "The first runner-up is Colombia."

The camera switched to a bewildered-looking Wurtzbach, who came back on the stage to get the crown as the same celebratory music repeated. Harvey said she'd be taking her first walk as Miss Universe, but mostly she stood immobile. A woman stood in between the two contestants, trying



**CORONATION CONFUSION.** Miss Philippines Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach, left, and Miss Colombia Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo wait for the announcement of the new Miss Universe at the Miss Universe pageant on December 20, 2015 in Las Vegas. Gutierrez was incorrectly crowned before Wurtzbach was named Miss Universe. (AP Photo/John Locher)

to comfort Gutierrez by rubbing her back.

Two minutes later, the comedian who hosts his own daytime talk show as well as the game show "Family Feud," returned, saying "let me just take control of this."

Harvey explained on the air that he misread the card he was given with the names of the winners. Colombia was listed as the first runner-up, and he'd been confused with how it was written. He held up the card for the camera.

"It is my mistake," he said. "Still, it's a great night. Please don't hold it against the ladies. We feel very badly, but it's still a great night."

Harvey later tweeted an apology to the women and viewers. "I feel terrible," he wrote. The Miss Universe organization also issued an apology.

Wurtzbach later said she was

happy to win, but confused and concerned for her rival. She said she tried to approach her backstage, but the Colombian contestant was crying and surrounded by a crowd of women.

"I did not take the crown from her," Wurtzbach said.

Celebrations quickly turned to anger in Colombia, where the hashtag "Respect the Crown" was the country's top trending topic on Twitter. Even the president was upset.

"They put the crown on her head," President Juan Manuel Santos said. "The photos are there to prove it. To me, as a Colombian, she is still Miss Universe."

It was the pageant's first time on Fox, and the Nielsen company said the contest was seen in the United States by 6.2 million people — strong numbers for the network. The previ-

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