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**Coalition Launches Ambitious Governmental Ethics Reform Campaign  
Public Overwhelmingly Supports Coalition Goals, Proposals**

**Baton Rouge, LA (April 24, 2007)** – Three dozen organizations from across the state launched today an ambitious initiative to transform Louisiana into a national model for governmental ethics laws and enforcement over the next 2-3 years.

The coalition, LA Ethics 1, includes statewide, regional, and local organizations ranging from business organizations like the Louisiana Association of Business & Industry (LABI) to good government groups like the Council for A Better Louisiana (CABL) to Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations from both metropolitan and rural areas.

Louisiana has a long and colorful history of government corruption, which has left our state with a brand associated with a lack of integrity and transparency in government – despite meaningful progress in recent years. Business executives nationwide suggest that this brand image is a significant obstacle to Louisiana's economic development efforts.

Louisiana's national image could take decades to improve if only incremental progress is achieved in this area. However, with a broad and activist coalition, in addition to an aggressive reform effort, dramatic improvements can be made to position Louisiana as a national model for governmental ethics laws and enforcement over a 2-3 year timeframe.

Success with the LA Ethics 1 initiative would not only improve enforcement of ethics laws and position Louisiana as a state known for honest, transparent, and accountable government, but would also move Louisiana to the top of national, independent, third-party evaluations of governmental ethics laws. Success would also enable communities across the state to vigorously counter negative historical assumptions held by some business prospects.

The coalition has worked with several legislative supporters to file bills for the 2007 legislative session that will:

- Require financial disclosure by legislators and legislative candidates
- Strengthen access to public records
- Make governmental ethics training mandatory
- Create an independent, full-time ethics administrator
- Enhance citizen access to ethics reports and filings

- Implement targeted technical improvements to state ethics laws

A recent statewide poll shows that Louisiana citizens strongly support initiatives to improve the state's governmental ethics laws. In a recent survey of likely voters, 96 percent of respondents felt it was important to dramatically improve the state's national standing with regard to governmental ethics laws, with 87 percent stating that such a move is "very important." Specific reform initiatives required to achieve this objective also have strong public support. For example, 90 percent of respondents want their legislators to support a mandatory training requirement for selected public officials and 78 percent of respondents want their legislators to support measures requiring expanded personal financial disclosure for elected officials and candidates.

Also released today was a white paper, "Transforming Louisiana into a National Model for Governmental Ethics: A Statewide Reform Initiative", which provides the rationale for the reform effort, an overview of the reform package, and a summary of public support for the effort. The coalition also launched a website today ([www.LAethics1.com](http://www.LAethics1.com) <<http://www.laethics1.com/>> ), which provides additional detail and will track legislative support for the effort. A listing of legislative supporters will be released in the near future.

***About LA Ethics 1:***

LA Ethics 1 is a coalition of prominent Louisiana business and civic organizations that is pursuing a comprehensive, 2-3 year reform agenda designed to position our state as a national model for governmental ethics laws and enforcement. For additional information on this effort and the latest listing of organizations comprising LA Ethics 1, please visit [www.LAethics1.com](http://www.LAethics1.com).

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