

# The Super Bowl con game: Billionaires get richer on our dime

written by Louisiana Workers Council  
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In July 2023, Donald Trump appeared with Jeff Landry at the tourist hotspot Cafe Du Monde in New Orleans. Landry aligned himself closely with the MAGA movement when he was Louisiana's Attorney General.

**Gov. Landry wines and dines the super-rich, promises corporations low wages, tax breaks, freedom to union-bust, discriminate, and pollute**

**Millions in taxpayer dollars spent to rehearse a military occupation of New Orleans**

You've worked hard and deserve to enjoy a good game. Come Sunday, get your chips and dip, BBQ, gumbo, beer, and relax.

But read on to see what the Super Bowl extravaganza costs you the other 364 days of the year. As we experience a few hours of entertainment, the mega-wealthy run away with a pot of gold at our expense.

**Benson Family Got Rich By Extorting Public Funds**

Let's start with the Saints franchise. The Benson family — first Tom and now Gayle — have followed a playbook of using the franchise to suck up public money. The billionaire Gayle Benson got rich by threatening to take the Saints elsewhere and pocketing the money once the state caved in to her demands for more of our tax dollars.

If the city owned the team, like they do in Green Bay, hundreds of millions of dollars would return to the city. Instead, the whole state subsidizes Benson's profits with our tax dollars. The franchise pays no rent to use the Superdome (and the Benson family doesn't pay a dime for using the Smoothie King Center, either), and they pay no sales taxes on the hundreds of millions in ticket sales, concessions, and merchandise, despite how much they charge for them.

The state even paid the Bensons \$186 million of our money in 2011 to keep the team in New Orleans and another \$392 million through 2025. On top of this, they sold a

massive office building to Benson for \$80 million with real estate tax exemptions (meaning more free money for her), and the loan is guaranteed by public debt. The \$138 million renaming fee paid by Caesar's also goes right to Benson, with no benefit to the city.

### **'But Queen Benson gives us turkeys ...'**

Benson has managed to convince people she's generous and good with her turkey giveaways and donations. Don't be fooled by these publicity stunts. Every bit of her so-called charity is a tax write-off and a photo-op. What she gives is a tiny fraction of what she has taken from us. Meanwhile, reporters recently exposed emails that prove that she and the team management conspired with the media and the former DA Leon Cannizaro to cover for the Catholic Church as it sought to shield clergy from rampant rape and sexual abuse charges. Clearly, we workers have our morals, and the rich — whether Benson, Landry, Trump, Biden, or Musk — have their own.

The NFL operates the same way. Its alleged charitable activities in the lead-up to the game are nothing but a smokescreen to distract from the fact that it is earning billions from the Super Bowl while giving us next to nothing.

### **Local Capitalists Get Rich While We Get Nothing**

The local hospitality moguls rake in millions from the Super Bowl, telling us it's "good for the economy," but none of those profits seem to trickle down to us. Small vendors have been banned. Almost none of the taxes derived from the boost in business go back to the city. Millions are spent to flood the city with cops. Taxes levied at hotels and restaurants are given to unelected private organizations like the Louisiana Stadium and Exposition District, the Convention Center, and New Orleans and Company. And they claim they can't afford to fund our schools or to give us workers health insurance, sick leave, vacation pay, or a living wage.

The most recent renovations of the Superdome cost \$506 million. That's on top of \$376 million in 2016. Meanwhile, the school board has to beg \$20 million. While it's the Mayor who's blocking this agreed-upon sum, the City Council, despite its outcry, is complicit. They've all wasted millions of our tax dollars on the more than 500 projects meant to impress the luxury yacht owners who have shown up for the Super Bowl. They're accommodating private planes at the airport while the rest of the city falls apart — literally. How many buildings have collapsed in the last few months? Hell, we can't even get street lights replaced or potholes filled, but the city can fork over millions to Benson and other elites, expecting us to serve them while we can't even afford rent.

### **Governor Landry and President Trump miss no opportunity to wine and dine capitalists with our money**

Gov. Landry, who is bought and paid for by corporations and who personally benefits from state funds (our money), is hosting a week of lavish events for some of the richest people in the world. Executives and owners of Amazon, Tesla, Google, Meta, and oil and gas companies, to name just a few, are showing up for the big game, and Landry is rolling out the red carpet. They will all wind up in special suites that cost between \$750,000 and \$1.2 million, paying tens of thousands for tickets to the game, enjoying special treatment that none of us can possibly afford. Nosebleed seats cost \$5,000 a pop. Meanwhile, Landry is pushing for tax cuts for these mega-rich parasites while he raises our sales taxes to the highest in the country.

He's especially sucking up to Zuckerberg's company Meta, giving them special tax exemptions, rewriting laws for them, offering discounted electric rates, and subsidizing their new mega AI data center near Monroe that will use up to a third of the state's electric capacity, endangering us all in times of crisis, especially during hurricane season. He's stealing our money to hand over to Meta so they can drain our electricity, destroy the environment (these data centers are major contributors

to climate change), all so they can create AI that will steal our jobs or spy on us.

This is Landry's plan for Louisiana — loot the state treasury for every cent we pay in taxes to make his pals richer, pay off his stormtroopers, and pocket as much money as he can. Even though Landry and the legislature have already rammed through the increase in our sales tax among many other anti-worker laws, we'll have the chance on March 29 to reject some aspects of his tax plan at the ballot. Vote no on amendment 2 to reject the tax plan, and vote no on amendment 3 to keep kids from being tried as adults.

Meanwhile, President Trump has decided to attend the Super Bowl this weekend to rub elbows with his billionaire friends. His visit will bring the Secret Service on top of the state police, ATF, FBI, and National Guard who have been patrolling the French Quarter as part of Landry's racist attempt to, in his words, "bring New Orleans to heel."

The armed forces currently patrolling the streets of New Orleans have nothing to do with protecting us. Landry is taking advantage of our grief and fear over last month's tragic terror attack to test out a military occupation of New Orleans. His sweeps of homeless encampments and constant antagonizing of locals are all part of pandering to real-estate developers and other millionaires he serves. Trump's attendance at the game is a slap in the face of everyone he has attacked in his first few weeks in office, a display of the luxury he lives in while we are impoverished by his executive orders.

Enjoy the game this weekend, rest, and gear up for the fight we've got on our hands. It's the working class vs. the billionaires. They've got their superyachts, jets, and skyboxes, but we've got the power of millions if we join together to fight for our right to a decent life.

