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Michael L. Parson

GOVERNOR
STATE OF MISSOURI

July 9, 2021

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI
101st GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

Herewith I return to you Senate Committee Substitute for House Committee Substitute for House Bill 685, entitled:

AN ACT

To repeal sections 27.010, 50.166, 50.530, 51.050, 55.060, 58.030, 59.021, 59.100, 60.010, 77.230, 79.080, 105.465, 162.291, 190.050, 204.610, 247.060, 249.140, 321.130, 451.040, and 483.010, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof twenty-one new sections relating to certain public officers, with an existing penalty provision.

I disapprove of Senate Committee Substitute for House Committee Substitute for House Bill 685. My reasons for disapproval are as follows:

While I recognize and applaud the General Assembly in their effort to improve the laws governing public officers, I cannot approve this bill as presented to me.

Section 105.465 allows a registered lobbyist who is seeking to hold, or who currently holds, a municipal or school district office to maintain his or her candidate committee for such office. I strongly disagree with this provision. Public officers should have the interests of the people they represent in mind, not those of the organization they have been hired to represent. This change would also only affect a few select individuals. I do not believe that such special laws, which are designed to benefit a few, should guide our state policy. Although this provision would create a narrow exception for registered lobbyists holding elected office, it would inevitably lead to increased potential for conflicts of interest in local offices and open the door to additional exemptions in the future. Further, this provision was also not heard in committee by either chamber of the General Assembly, and citizens were unable to provide testimony or feedback on this change. This proposal does not serve Missourians' best interests.

There are multiple provisions in this bill that I support. Thankfully, many of those sections also appear in other legislation, notably House Bill 271, which I have signed. I look forward to working with the General Assembly to address issues related to public officers while maintaining safeguards to ensure that public officers serve those they are elected to represent.

In accordance with the above stated reasons for disapproval, I am returning Senate Committee Substitute for House Committee Substitute for House Bill 685 without my approval.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Parson", is written in a cursive style.

Michael L. Parson
Governor