GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI

JEFFERSON CITY
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JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON
GOVERNOR

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July 5, 2016

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Herewith I return to you Conference Committee Substitute No. 2 for House Committee Substitute for Senate Substitute for Senate Bill No. 608 entitled:

AN ACT

To repeal sections 167.638, 174.335, 197.315, 208.152, 208.952, 208.985, 335.300, 335.305, 335.310, 335.315, 335.320, 335.325, 335.330, 335.335, 335.340, 335.345, 335.350, 335.355, 338.200, 376.1235, 376.1237, and 536.031, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof forty-five new sections relating to health care, with a contingent effective date for certain sections.

I disapprove of Conference Committee Substitute No. 2 for House Committee Substitute for Senate Substitute for Senate Bill No. 608. My reasons for disapproval are as follows:

Conference Committee Substitute No. 2 for House Committee Substitute for Senate Substitute for Senate Bill No. 608 (Senate Bill No. 608) would needlessly punish our state's most vulnerable citizens without improving access to care or bringing Missourians' tax dollars back to Missouri. While these kinds of market-based reforms and incentives may be acceptable in the context of an expanded Medicaid population that includes more working Missourians, they are cruel and punitive when imposed solely on some of our very poorest and most vulnerable citizens.

Senate Bill No. 608 would impose a host of new penalties and fees on those who are least able to afford them, namely: low-income families, the aged, blind, and disabled. Fees for missed appointments and increased fees for emergency room visits later deemed non-emergency may seem very reasonable to those of us who have access to reliable transportation, who are able to take time off work for appointments and who have ready-access to telephone or e-mail services. Missourians who are disabled or who live in extreme poverty often cannot take advantage of these blessings that others may take for granted.

Over the past four years, the legislature has refused to expand Medicaid eligibility to cover working adults making up to 138 percent of the poverty level, or about $15,000 a year for an

individual, and Missouri has turned down billions of dollars in federal funding as a result. Currently, in order to qualify for Medicaid in Missouri, a single parent with two children can make no more than $3,600 a year.

Strengthening Medicaid would provide health coverage to an additional 300,000 working Missourians, create thousands jobs in high-paying health care fields and generate millions of dollars in revenues for other priorities. Due to the legislature's inaction, Missourians continue to pay taxes to the federal government only to see those dollars go to the other 32 states that have moved forward with Medicaid expansion.

Gouging the poor while continuing to send our tax dollars to other states is not reforming our Medicaid system.

In accordance with the above stated reasons for disapproval, I am returning Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 608 without my approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor