GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI

JEFFERSON CITY
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JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON
GOVERNOR

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July 1, 2016

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Herewith I return to you House Bill No. 1870 entitled:

AN ACT:

To repeal sections 1.310, 94.360, 143.121, 143.173, and 285.530, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof five new sections relating to the collecting of money by public entities.

I disapprove of House Bill No. 1870. My reasons for disapproval are as follows:

At a time when many believe that not enough is being done to address illegal immigration, House Bill No. 1870 would take Missouri backwards by undoing an important safeguard currently in place and widely used to verify the legal status of employees and applicants for employment.

In 2008, Missouri passed commonsense legislation to crack down on the use of illegal workers by Missouri businesses. House Bill No. 1549 (2008) made it unlawful for a business entity to "knowingly employ, hire for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien to perform work within the state of Missouri." The legislation further required the use of the E-Verify system, which allows an employer to quickly determine the legal status of an employee or applicant for employment, prior to a business being awarded certain contracts or grants from the state or a political subdivision or receiving any state-administered tax credit, tax abatement or subsidized loan. It is a system that has been used by thousands of employers across Missouri to verify the legal status of their employees and prospective employees. Now, just a few years later, the General Assembly would abandon these principles by allowing an employer to avoid this important safeguard against the employment of undocumented workers if the use of E-Verify, which is offered free of charge, "would result in a substantial difficulty or expense on such business entity." The current law is sound public policy, protects taxpayer dollars, and should remain the law of Missouri.

E-Verify is an internet-based system operated by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in partnership with the Social Security Administration and is offered to employers at no charge. The system is easy to use and quickly informs the employer of an individual's employment eligibility. There is nothing challenging or costly about E-Verify that would cause

"substantial difficulty or expense" to an employer and any argument to the contrary is frivolous. The E-Verify system protects taxpayers against their tax dollars flowing to businesses that employ unauthorized aliens and efforts, such as House Bill 1870, that would relieve a business seeking public funds from this obligation is profoundly poor public policy.

Government contracts, tax credits and other taxpayer subsidies must not be awarded to businesses that employ illegal workers and the General Assembly's effort to weaken existing safeguards through passage of House Bill No. 1870 will not receive my approval.

In accordance with the above stated reasons for disapproval, I am returning House Bill No. 1870 without my approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor