



GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI

JEFFERSON CITY

65102

JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON
GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 720
(573) 751-3222

August 11, 2015

Reuben Shelton, President
Missouri Bar
326 Monroe St.
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear Mr. Shelton:

I am writing to thank you for the Missouri Bar's principled and thoughtful opposition to Senate Bill 67 and House Bill 799, which would have authorized new court fees and surcharges to fund a myriad of local capital projects.

Like the Missouri Bar Board of Governors, I am very concerned that the practice of turning to court costs to fund local projects will unduly restrict access of ordinary citizens to the state's courts to resolve disputes.

In addition to jeopardizing Missourians' access to the courts, the proliferation of excessive court fees undermines trust in our judicial system as a whole. As I said when I signed the municipal court reform legislation in Senate Bill 5 with your strong support, our courts must exist to serve justice, not raise revenue. The court fee hikes authorized by Senate Bill 67 and House Bill 799 amount to back-door tax increases that would further erode the public's confidence in our judicial system at the very time we are taking meaningful strides to restore it.

While I recognize that many local communities have legitimate capital improvement needs, raising court fees – often on those who have the least ability to pay -- is not the appropriate method to fund these priorities.

Given the harmful effect these bills would have, recent statements by legislators that they may attempt to override my vetoes of these bills during their veto session on September 16 are deeply concerning. Once again, I thank you for your clear and unequivocal opposition to these ill-advised court fee increases. Working together, I'm confident we will continue to move our judicial system and our entire state forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Nixon", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor