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Michael L. Parson

GOVERNOR
STATE OF MISSOURI

July 13, 2018

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI
99th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

Herewith I return to you House Committee Substitute for Senate Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 894 & 921 entitled:

AN ACT

To repeal sections 161.106, 162.1115, 173.670, and 178.550, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof eight new sections relating to education curriculum involving science and technology.

I disapprove of House Committee Substitute for Senate Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 894 & 921. My reasons for disapproval are as follows:

Section 161.261 of the bill establishes the "STEM Career Awareness Program," with the purported goal of increasing STEM career awareness among students in grades six through eight. While I fully support the promotion of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and making our state's students aware of career opportunities in those fields, I cannot approve of the program's provisions as written.

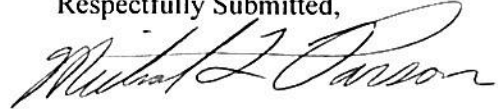
As part of the STEM Career Awareness Program, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is charged with selecting a provider for an online program to introduce students to a wide variety of STEM careers and technology. The bill contains a detailed list of criteria the program must meet in order to be selected. The criteria are so specific that they appear to be narrowly tailored to apply to only one company, which violates the Missouri Constitution.

Article III, Section 40 of the Missouri Constitution prohibits the General Assembly from passing any local or special law "granting to any corporation, association or individual any special or exclusive right, privilege or immunity" or "where a general law can be made applicable." While imposing certain requirements for the program is appropriate, the opportunity to establish an online STEM career curriculum should be open to many providers so that the Department has the ability to choose the best option from qualified applicants. Such legislation would receive a welcome review from my administration in the future.

I also look forward to working with the legislature next session on the computer science credit provisions of this bill, which unfortunately will not be enacted this year due to the aforementioned issues.

In accordance with the above stated reasons for disapproval, I am returning House Committee Substitute for Senate Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 894 & 921 without my approval.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael L. Parson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "M".

Michael L. Parson
Governor