



OFFICE OF

No. SB 549

THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA., May 8, 20 15

TIME SIGNED: 11:35 AM

TO THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
AND MEMBERS OF THE OKLAHOMA SENATE
FIRST SESSION OF THE
FIFTY FIFTH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE

ENROLLED SENATE BILL NO. 549:

This is to advise you that on this date, pursuant to the authority vested in me by Section 11 of Article VI of the Oklahoma Constitution to approve or object to legislation presented to me, I have VETOED Senate Bill 549.

Senate Bill 549 (Bill) dramatically alters how future elected State officers are to be paid. It decouples State officers' salaries from judicial salaries, and instead, codifies a specific and fixed annual salary for each officer, including the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Attorney General, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Corporation Commissioners, the State Treasurer, the State Auditor and Inspector, the State Insurance Commissioner, and the Commissioner of Labor (collectively referred to as "State Officers").

There are two significant deficiencies that compel me to veto this Bill. First, recent compensation reform initiatives have discarded the practice of codifying State employee salaries for good reason: fixing salary in statute tends to calcify salaries without regard to such pertinent considerations as inflation; the current fiscal health of the State; and most importantly, each particular employee's performance.

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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**OKLAHOMA SECRETARY
OF STATE**



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That is why neutral third-party compensation boards determine the salaries of officials in the other two co-equal branches of Oklahoma government, the Judiciary and the Legislature. These boards are comprised of representatives from a wide swath of our State's citizenry—including labor and civic organizations, communications media and retail business, agriculture, nonstate-supported educational institutions, and religious organizations. As such, the boards emphasize the fact that it is the people of this great State who are the true bosses of the leaders they elect.

It would be better policy to create a new and distinct compensation board for State Officers in the Oklahoma Statutes. In the meantime, however, I cannot approve this Bill. To do so would strip State Officers' compensation decisions from being made at least by a neutral and representative board, that being the Board on Judicial Compensation, which currently sets the salaries to which State Officers' salaries are tied.

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Mary Fallin

By Bucky Welch

Date/Time May 8, 2015 4:15 pm