

June 25, 2020

TO THE MISSISSIPPI STATE SENATE

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE FOR SENATE BILL 2737

I am returning Senate Bill Number 2737: "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 23-15-551 AND 23-15-691, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, BY DELETING THE OPTION OF MARKING ELECTION BALLOTS WITH INDELIBLE PENCIL; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES."

Senate Bill 2737 amends Section 23-15-551 to require voters to mark their ballot with ink only removing the option to use "indelible pencil." Limiting voters to mark their ballot with ink only is a helpful change.

However, another proposed revision in Senate Bill 2737 inconsistently amends Section 23-15-691 and Section 23-15-551 stating that "The mere fact that a ballot was marked in pencil shall not disqualify the ballot from being counted." The only form of pencil allowed under current law is "indelible pencil." Accordingly, if marks with a "*pencil*" which may be subject to erasure or other manipulation, as opposed to "*indelible pencil*" which is not, are not disqualifying, there is potential risk of manipulation on the ballot. For this reason and to secure the importance and integrity of elections, I am vetoing Senate Bill 2737.

Respectfully submitted,

TATE REEVES
GOVERNOR