



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

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April 2, 2008

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Mr. Speaker and Members of the House:

I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval H. 4686, R-222.

H. 4686 would direct the Budget and Control Board to transfer ownership of a National Guard operations and maintenance shop in Newberry to the County of Newberry.

I am vetoing H. 4686, R-222, because it allows the state to give away property that has been categorized as surplus. It remains the policy of this administration that the practice of giving surplus property away deprives state taxpayers of both the value of that property and a clear understanding of what government really costs. This has been a long-standing concern of mine.

In 1999, I offered an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would have stopped the Defense Department practice of giving away surplus equipment to local governments. I refused to sign similar bills that came to my desk in 2003, and subsequently announced at a meeting of the Budget and Control Board that I would veto future such conveyances. In 2005 and 2006, I vetoed conveyances of National Guard armories to Inman, Jonesville, Lockhart, Bamberg, and Lake City.

I sincerely believe that if we are to make good decisions in government, they need to reflect the real cost of that decision. The process of giving assets from one level of government to another over-reports the cost of government from the giving entity and under-reports for the receiving government.

Ultimately, there are two fundamental principles at issue here; prudent property management and transparency in government. Both of these principals require, in keeping the best interests of the taxpayers at the forefront, that the state receive fair consideration for the transfer of any surplus state property. Though we believe this transfer is well-intentioned, this bill fails to do that.

Therefore, I am returning H. 4686, R-222, to you without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "MS", written over a horizontal line.

Mark Sanford