



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 12267
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June 11, 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. 4773, R-390, a bill that grants the Employee Security Commission (ESC) permission to expend \$8.6 million in federal funds for capital improvement projects and technology upgrades at offices around the state.

The bulk of the \$8.6 million is going to fund a new ESC office in Spartanburg County, in addition to supplementing existing funds to begin construction on an ESC office in Dorchester County. Instead of putting millions of dollars toward brick and mortar, we believe the money should be put toward desperately needed and long overdue technology upgrades.

Imagine this: a mill worker who has just been laid off in Spartanburg walks into a sparkling new \$5 million building and instead of inputting his information into a computer, he has to hand write his personal information multiple times on several different applications, as is currently the case. We should focus on bringing the existing antiquated system into the 21st century as other states like Virginia have done.

The old-fashioned database at ESC has been an issue for years, and we believe it is past time to get on board with a modern-day approach to keeping records. While we applaud the fact that \$750,000 of the requested funds would go to create automated payment systems for specific ESC programs and for technology upgrades for the Employment and Training and Administrative Divisions, we think this process is happening too slow.

Furthermore, it is not financially fair or responsible for the taxpayers of this state to fund dozens upon dozens of staff positions to maintain a hand-written system of record-keeping. Within this bill, \$1.3 million would be spent on administrative funding for the Unemployment Insurance program. While much of these requested funds are due to federal budget cuts, we still believe that resources and staff positions could be consolidated by upgrading to an automated payment system.

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This Administration believes that ESC's priority should be bringing its database up to today's technological standards, which would improve customer satisfaction and make for a more efficient system to connect employers with the unemployed. The current system has separate databases for Unemployment Insurance, for a job database, and for aptitude assessments provided by the Department of Commerce. Not having a central, consolidated database causes issues with records being incomplete or unmatched from one database to another. The longer we drag our feet on this, the longer it will take for the unemployed to truly get the help that they need.

For these reasons, I am vetoing and returning without my approval H. 4773, R-390.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MS', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Sanford