



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE Box 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

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 signature H. 4982, R-395.

This bill sets and appropriates millage for educational purposes in Dillon County. I did not sign this bill because it only furthers what we consider to be a flawed and bizarre governance model over Dillon County Schools.

In simple terms, let me explain how the current process shreds the notion of Home Rule, and the idea of allowing working people to have a voice in how their local schools are run. Rather than do as every other county in the state does, and having a local board decide local school funding – in this county, one person is the proverbial “king” of funding. The board is chosen by the House member from Dillon County and the two Senators who represent, but do not reside in Dillon County. To further highlight the bizarre nature of the governance, the appointing authority is also the head football coach and athletic director at Dillon High School – giving him power over the people who employ him and set his salary.

Earlier this year, I vetoed H. 4844 which changed the terms of a referendum that had already been approved by the Dillon County voters. It came as no surprise that the veto was overridden in the House by a 1-0 vote as only the bill’s sponsor was expected to vote.

It defies logic that the state legislative process should be used to perform functions that are routinely handled by the local citizenry in 45 other counties around the state. Even when the voters are granted input, their wishes are overruled by legislative fiat – as evidenced in the case of H. 4844. We have long advocated for some uniformity in structure and governance of school boards to provide greater accountability and transparency to the communities they serve. However, we hold Dillon County out as the single greatest example of the need for such a reform.

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell, Jr.

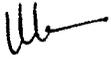
Page Two

June 11, 2008

In the specific case of Dillon County, we believe the time has come for Columbia to let go of the control it exercises over the school district. While the General Assembly does play a very important role in education – both in policy and funding – it should be at a statewide level. With Dillon County schools, the members of the Board of Education are appointed by the legislative delegation and school taxes are set by legislation.

For the reasons stated above, I am vetoing H. 4982, R-395.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MS', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Sanford