



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

March 20, 2006

The Honorable Robert 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. 4294, R-249.

H. 4294 would direct the Budget and Control Board to transfer ownership of a National Guard armory in Bamberg and one in Lake City to their respective city governments.

I am vetoing H. 4294, R-249 because it allows the state to give away surplus property, depriving state taxpayers of both the benefit of that property and the clarity of the budget process that they are entitled to. 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 government. 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, I vetoed conveyances of National Guard armories in Inman, Jonesville and Lockhart.

I sincerely believe that if we are to make good decisions in government, they need to reflect reality. Conveyances like the ones in this bill frustrate attempts to create clear budgets that reflect economic reality. When the state gives away "free stuff" to local government, or vice versa, it makes it more difficult for regular taxpayers to get an accurate picture of the basket of goods each portion of their tax burden – local, state and federal - is actually purchasing. In this particular case, the cost of state government will appear higher than it really is; the cost of local government will appear lower than it really is. The fundamental principles of prudent property management and of transparency in government each require that the state receive fair consideration for the transfer of surplus state property. This bill fails to do that.

The Honorable Robert Harrell, Jr.
March 20, 2006
Page 2

Therefore, I am returning H. 4294, R-249 to you without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mark Sanford', written in a cursive style.

Mark Sanford

cc: The Honorable Thomas N. Rhoad
The Honorable George H. Bailey
The Honorable Bessie A. Moody-Lawrence