

April 17, 2000

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE FOR HOUSE BILL 1409

I am returning House Bill No. 1409: "AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ESTABLISH A VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TRACK AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR STUDENTS TO THE COLLEGE PREPARATORY CURRICULUM; TO PROVIDE THAT STUDENTS IN THE VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TRACK SHALL BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE CORE CURRICULUM DEFINED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND MAY EARN CREDITS FOR PARTICIPATION IN COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES" without my approval, and assign the following reasons for my veto:

There can be no doubt that our number one priority is and will remain the education of children in this state. It is our intention to work with state and local leaders, administrators, teachers, parents, students and all those interested in the improvement and expansion of educational opportunities for Mississippi's children to create a responsive and responsible, durable and dynamic system of public education.

With the understanding that under current law school districts are already authorized to create such an alternative program of study, I see no cause to approve this bill. In the interest of allowing local school districts, administrators, teachers and parents to positively affect the direction of their schools, these matters would appear to be best left in the hands of the local districts and the families they serve.

In addition, when we address matters of curriculum at the state level, let us make sure that we are opening doors of opportunity for Mississippi's students. There are a number of questions left unanswered by this bill, questions which I am unsure any of us can answer at this point but which we should explore. Given that this measure is not time-sensitive, I would encourage the members of the Mississippi Legislature to fully study the need for and the proper implementation of alternative curriculum legislation during the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,

RONNIE MUSGROVE  
GOVERNOR