

May 14, 2004

TO THE MISSISSIPPI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Governor's Veto Message for House Bill 797

I am returning House Bill 797: "AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF UNION COUNTY TO ADOPT ORDINANCES REGULATING THE RUNNING AT LARGE OF DOGS AND OTHER DOMESTIC ANIMALS THAT CREATE A NUISANCE OR POSE A THREAT TO THE HEALTH, SAFETY OR WELFARE OF PERSONS OR OTHER ANIMALS IN THE COUNTY; TO PRESCRIBE CERTAIN PROVISIONS THAT MUST BE INCLUDED AND CERTAIN PROVISIONS THAT MAY BE INCLUDED WITHIN ANY SUCH ORDINANCES; TO PROVIDE THAT NEITHER THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF UNION COUNTY NOR AN AGENT OR EMPLOYEE OF UNION COUNTY SHALL BE LIABLE FOR THE INJURY OR DEATH OF ANY DOG OR ANIMAL IF REASONABLE CARE IS EXERCISED IN CARRYING OUT THE POWERS AUTHORIZED AND DUTIES REQUIRED UNDER THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES" without my approval and assign the following reasons for my veto.

It is my understanding that the intent of this legislation is to allow Union County to contract with private citizens to operate an animal shelter and to provide liability protection for the County in the process. While I respect the intent of this legislation, I do have concerns that the bill as written may have unintended consequences in that it could affect dogs engaged in hunting activities.

To facilitate the operation of animal shelters across the state, the scope of this bill could be expanded beyond Union County as long as an exclusion for hunting activities is included. With the inclusion of such changes, this is a subject which can be addressed in the 2005 General Session.

I urge the members to sustain the veto and reject House Bill 797.

Respectfully submitted,

HALEY BARBOUR
GOVERNOR