

March 28, 2002

TO THE MISSISSIPPI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE FOR HOUSE BILL 1171

I am returning House Bill Number 1171: "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 67-3-22, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO ALLOW A HOSPITALITY OPERATOR TO PROVIDE COMPLIMENTARY LIGHT WINE OR BEER PRODUCED AT A BREWPUB TO CERTAIN GUESTS AND TO DELETE THE REPEALER ON SUCH SECTION; TO AUTHORIZE A BREWPUB TO PACKAGE IN KEGS LIGHT WINE OR BEER MANUFACTURED BY IT THAT IS TO BE ENTERED INTO BEER COMPETITIONS THAT ARE CONDUCTED OUTSIDE THIS STATE AND TO LIMIT TO TWO THE NUMBER OF KEGS THAT MAY BE TAKEN TO ANY ONE COMPETITION; TO AMEND SECTION 67-3-28, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO INCREASE FROM FOUR PERCENT TO FIVE PERCENT THE PERCENT OF ALCOHOL BY WEIGHT THAT CAN BE CONTAINED IN BEER AND LIGHT WINE MANUFACTURED AND SOLD BY BREWPUBS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES" without my approval, and assign the following reasons for my veto.

I am vetoing House Bill No. 1171 that raises the alcohol content level from four percent to five percent in beer brewed in brew pubs because throughout my career I have consistently opposed the increase of alcohol content in all malt beverages, including those beers and malt liquors sold throughout the State in grocery and convenience stores. Most recently, in 1998, I cast a vote against the legislation that increased from 4% to 5% the alcohol content for all other beer and light wine.

In my 2001 State of the State address, I urged the Legislature to reduce the blood alcohol level, for purposes of our laws governing driving under the influence, from .10% to .08% to make our roads and highways safer. I am proud to have signed that bill into law this Legislative session. I have worked hard to implement measures that would reduce highway fatalities, and they were in fact reduced by 27.5% in 2001 on Mississippi Highway Patrol roads. I believe that signing this bill would be counterproductive to these efforts and I cannot in good conscience sign House Bill No. 1171.

I urge the members to sustain the veto and reject House Bill No. 1171.

Respectfully submitted,

RONNIE MUSGROVE