

March 14, 2002

TO THE MISSISSIPPI STATE SENATE:

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE FOR SENATE BILL 2625

I am returning Senate Bill Number 2625: "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 25-3-41, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO DELETE THE PROVISION REQUIRING APPROVAL FROM THE GOVERNOR AND THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION BEFORE STATE OR FEDERAL FUNDS MAY BE EXPENDED IN TRAVELING OUTSIDE OF THE CONTINENTAL LIMITS OF THE UNITED STATES; TO ALLOW ANY STATE OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE TO MAKE HIS TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS WITHOUT USING THE TRAVEL AGENCY ON CONTRACT WITH THE STATE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES" without my approval, and assign the following reasons for my veto.

I am returning Senate Bill 2625 for the simple reason that in these tough economic times, with the budget straits confronted by all of State government, we do not need to decrease financial oversight; rather we need to continue to be vigilant in ensuring that tax dollars are spent prudently. The elimination of a finding by agency heads that international travel by State employees would be beneficial, with concurrence by the Department of Finance and Administration and the Governor, runs counter to our collective effort to monitor carefully the expenditure of State resources. While this legislation is well intentioned, this is not the time to relax oversight. International travel is exceptional and expensive, thus justifying the additional consideration provided for in current law.

The second modification to Section 25-3-41 (9)(c) would authorize State employees who can find less expensive travel arrangements over the internet than are obtainable through the State approved travel agency to take advantage of the lower fares and rates. This aspect of the bill could save the State money and deserves to be brought forward and adopted this session.

I urge the members to sustain the veto and reject Senate Bill No. 2625.

Respectfully submitted,

RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR