

May 10, 2024

TO THE MISSISSIPPI SENATE:

GOVERNORS VETO MESSAGE FOR SENATE BILL 2180

I am returning Senate Bill 2180: AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 45-1-19, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO ENFORCE ANY CITY ORDINANCE; TO DELETE THE PROVISION OF LAW THAT REQUIRES PRIOR WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM THE CHIEF OF THE CAPITOL POLICE OR THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY FOR EVENTS WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE ON ANY STREET OR SIDEWALK IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO ANY BUILDING OR PROPERTY OWNED OR OCCUPIED BY ANY OFFICIAL, AGENCY, BOARD, COMMISSION, OFFICE OR OTHER ENTITY OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, OR WHICH CAN REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO BLOCK, IMPEDE OR OTHERWISE HINDER INGRESS THERETO AND/OR EGRESS THEREFROM; TO AMEND SECTION 9-12-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMPENSATION OF CCID INFERIOR COURT JUDGES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

Senate Bill 2180 seeks to expand the jurisdiction of the Capitol Police to make arrests for any violation of the City of Jacksons ordinances which occur within the boundaries of the City of Jackson. Further, Senate Bill 2180 seeks to expand the jurisdiction of the Capitol Complex Improvement District (CCID) inferior court to include any violations of the City of Jacksons ordinances or municipal code that occur in whole or in part within the boundaries of the CCID.

The City of Jackson has enacted hundreds and hundreds of pages of ordinances encompassing a wide variety of subjects that have absolutely nothing to do with public safety, including ordinances addressing pets, livestock and wild animals; cemetery conditions; solid waste; advertising and signs; and maintaining the area around houses and businesses. By way of just one example, the City of Jackson has enacted an ordinance making it unlawful for the owner of real property within the City to allow weeds, tall grass, rubbish, bushes or any other unsightly, objectionable or unsanitary matter whatsoever to accumulate or remain on their property. Expanding the jurisdiction of the Capitol Police and the CCID inferior court to such matters would distract them from the purpose for which they were created by the Legislature, to attempt to restore law and order in the City of Jackson through the enforcement of state criminal laws.

The Mississippi Department of Public Safety (Department) has estimated that it will take a minimum of 200 sworn law enforcement officers to adequately and effectively patrol and enforce state criminal laws in the expanded CCID area set to go into effect in July. Further, the Department has estimated it will take approximately 250 sworn law enforcement officers to adequately and effectively patrol and enforce state criminal laws in the further expanded CCID area established by House Bill 1487 (2024 Legislative Session) set to take effect on July 1, 2025. Despite the Departments budget request to the Legislature for funding to hire adequate officers to patrol the future expanded CCID areas, the Legislature has only funded 187 officers for state fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025).

The City of Jackson is beginning to realize the benefits of Capitol Polices enforcement of state criminal laws, and it would be unwise to expand the duties of Capitol Police to code enforcement at this time. Capitol Police have proven time and time again to be up to the task of restoring public safety within the CCID, and when provided adequate funding and resources by the Legislature, I am certain they will be able to protect public safety in an expanded CCID area. However, diverting the already thin resources of Capitol Police to code/ordinance enforcement would be incongruent with increasing public safety in the City of Jackson. Municipal ordinances and codes are enacted by the City of Jackson and should be enforced exclusively by the City when they do not touch on matters of public safety.

Further, it should be noted that the provision of Senate Bill 2180 authorizing and funding the employment of two full-time and one part-time CCID inferior court judges (and support staff) is also contained in Section 24 of House Bill 1820 (2024 Legislative Session), which will become law.

In sum, it would be imprudent at this time to expand the limited resources of Capitol Police and the CCID inferior court beyond the enforcement of state laws aimed at protecting public safety. Thus, I am compelled to veto Senate Bill 2180.

Respectfully submitted,

TATE REEVES

GOVERNOR