



GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI

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JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON
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July 1, 2013

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Herewith I return to you Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224 entitled:

AN ACT

To repeal sections 84.480, 84.490, 84.510, 86.200, 86.257, 86.263, 313.817, and 568.040, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof nine new sections relating to public safety.

I disapprove of Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224. My reasons for disapproval are as follows:

Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224 purports to deter minors from presenting false identification in order to obtain access to an excursion gambling boat. In reality, Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224 reduces the maximum penalty available for such an offense. The current classification for this offense is a class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in jail and up to a \$500.00 fine. Instead, the bill would lower the offense classification to an infraction, eliminate incarceration as a potential penalty, and require only the payment of a \$500.00 fine.

The State of Missouri takes illegal gambling seriously and has appropriately enacted strong laws and penalties to combat these types of offenses. However, underage gambling continues to be a problem. Since 1997, Missouri casinos have paid \$1.66 million in fines related to underage patrons. Therefore, lowering the available penalties for such conduct, and removing a prosecutor's ability to seek incarceration for illegal gambling, is not a recipe to deter this criminal behavior.

Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224 would also allow an individual with a single conviction for criminal nonsupport to petition the court for the purpose of expunging all records associated with that offense. While current law permits the extreme remedy of expungement in very limited circumstances, Conference

Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224 would expand expungement eligibility without providing adequate standards on which this relief would be provided.

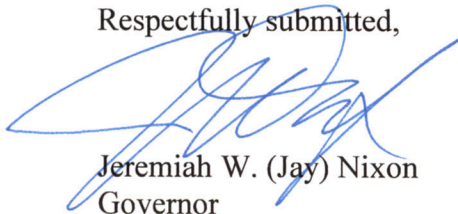
Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224 provides two distinct standards for granting expungement, with the common denominator being that eight years has passed since the person has been sentenced or completed probation. The first requires that the individual: (1) has not been convicted of any subsequent offense; (2) does not have any other felony convictions; (3) is current on all child support obligations; and (4) has no other charges or administrative child support actions pending. **Or**, in lieu of the foregoing, the individual has successfully completed a criminal nonsupport courts program. The first standard neglects to take into consideration whether the individual has a history of arrearages and late payments following the nonsupport conviction. As such, individuals who are chronically late and deficient on their support obligations during the past eight years can make themselves current and then apply to have their records expunged as long as no other charges are pending and there are no subsequent or other felony convictions.

The second standard requires only that the individual complete a criminal nonsupport court program. While this program is a meaningful tool to foster compliance with a person's support obligations, it should not take the place of also requiring that the individual demonstrate a history of complying with any support order since the underlying conviction and has no other subsequent convictions.

Exacerbating the insufficiency of these standards is that Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224 does not provide the court with any discretion in determining whether to order expungement. Instead, the bill explicitly states that the court "*shall enter an order of expungement*" if either of the standards are satisfied. Therefore, the court would be deprived of the opportunity to consider other relevant factors, such as the individual's history of meeting support obligations since the previous conviction, as well as any statement that the victim or prosecutor would like to make in objection to any order for expungement; indeed, Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224 does not even provide the victim or prosecutor with an opportunity to be heard on the matter. In sum, neither of the two standards is adequate, and depriving the court of discretion on such an important issue as expunging an individual's criminal records is unacceptable.

In accordance with the above stated reasons for disapproval, I am returning Conference Committee Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 224 without my approval.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor