

July 2, 2009

Mr. Alfred W. Speer
Clerk of the House of Representatives
State Capitol
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Re: House Bill No. 896 by Representative Richard
Ethics/Financial Disclos: Provides relative to annual financial disclosure for certain
public servants

Dear Mr. Speer:

In the 2008 First Extraordinary Session, the legislature and my administration worked with a variety of stakeholders to pass comprehensive ethics reform. Personal financial disclosure for elected officials across all levels of government was a key component of this reform effort. The public began to see the practical impact of this legislation in May of this year, when hundreds of elected and appointed officials filed personal financial disclosure forms for the first time in Louisiana's history that are available online for oversight by all our citizens.

House Bill No. 896 amends these newly created laws to allow some elected members of governing authorities of political subdivisions to file a less extensive form of disclosure than what is currently required in law. Today, elected officials who represent voting districts with a population of 5,000 or more persons file what is known as "Tier 2" financial disclosure. House Bill No. 896 would instead allow some of these members to file "Tier 3" financial disclosure.

"Tier 3" was intentionally created to require a less extensive form of disclosure for those elected officials representing very small municipalities and districts. The following are examples of what is required for "Tier 2" disclosure that is not submitted under "Tier 3":

- Employer, job title, and a brief job description for the individual and spouse;
- Name, address, brief description of, and aggregate amount of income received from each business that provides income to the individual or spouse;
- Brief description, value, and location of each parcel of immovable property with a value exceeding \$2,000 in which the individual or spouse has an interest;
- Name and brief description of certain investment securities having a value exceeding \$5,000 held by the individual or spouse; and
- Name and address of certain creditors to whom the individual or spouse owes any liability exceeding \$10,000.

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Although proponents noted the less extensive requirements in House Bill No. 896 would only affect a few dozen officials, my staff opposed this bill in both the House and Senate Governmental Affairs Committees. I believe we reached the right balance in the 2008 First Extraordinary Session, working with many stakeholders to enact and implement comprehensive personal financial disclosure. The "Tier 3" filings have not even begun yet, as the law requires the first forms to be submitted in May 2010. I prefer to give these laws a chance to work before considering making significant changes.

For these reasons, I have vetoed House Bill No. 896 and hereby return it to the House of Representatives.

Sincerely yours,

Bobby Jindal
Governor

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