



Jeff Landry
Governor

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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June 20, 2024

The Honorable Phillip R. DeVillier
Speaker of the House
Louisiana House of Representatives
Box 94062
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

The Honorable Michelle Fontenot
Clerk of the House
State Capitol
900 N. 3rd St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

RECEIVED
JUN 20 2024
Rmw
3:02 pm
House of Representatives
Clerk's Office

RE: House Bill 772 of the 2024 Regular Session by Representative Jerome Zeringue

Dear Speaker DeVillier and Clerk Fontenot:

Please be advised that I have vetoed House Bill 772 of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session. The purpose of the Cemetery Task Force is to assess response and recovery needs related to cemeteries during a state or parish emergency declaration. R.S. 29:726.4 (A). This task force is activated by the director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness ("GOHSEP") only when an emergency declaration has been issued and there is evidence of cemetery damage. R.S. 29:726.4 (D). However, House Bill 772 dramatically expands the authority, powers, and purpose of this task force, and does so without providing corresponding oversight by a state department or office. This legislation would grant the task force, a non-judicial entity, the authority to file lawsuits against private parties for specific performance and to recover federal cemetery funds.

This legislation would also allow the task force to expand and appoint its own membership without limitation, and beyond the oversight of any state department or office. Although the activation of this task force should be temporary, and only at the discretion of the GOHSEP director, this bill imposes continuous obligations on the task force that are more appropriate for a state department or office. It would also permit the task force to disregard certain laws and promulgate its own rules.

Additionally, Section (F)(4) gives the task force the ultimate authority to direct state, parish, and local resources for emergency cemetery response. This conflicts with the authority given to the director of GOHSEP, who is responsible for coordinating and directing the activities of all agencies and organizations for emergency preparedness. R.S. 29:725(H).

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The Cemetery Task Force is designed to be a tool for emergency preparedness response at the direction of GOHSEP and for a limited duration, and such an extreme expansion of powers and duties is not appropriate for such a task force.

For these reasons, House Bill 772 will not become law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Landry', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Landry
Governor

Enclosure: Returned House Bill 772