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GOVERNOR BRYANT RECKLESSLY VETOES HB 1033

The Mississippi State Conference NAACP is deeply disappointed with Governor Bryant’s recent veto of the Reentry Council Reforms Bill or House Bill Number 1033. “This bill was passed through a bi-partisan effort to adopt the recommendations of the Mississippi Reentry Council to help the formerly incarcerated reintegrate into their communities and increase public safety while reducing budgetary pressures caused by the high cost of incarceration,” said Derrick Johnson, MS State Conference President.

In vetoing the bill, Bryant stated that, “while House Bill 1033 was introduced with good intentions, these good intentions were ultimately spoiled.” In fact, the bill’s good intentions were spoiled by Governor Bryant himself.

Bryant says he vetoed the bill because it “would allow certain inmates convicted as habitual offenders… to be eligible for parole after serving 25% of the sentence.”

This is patently untrue.

What the bill would have done was allow some inmates who had previously been ineligible for parole be eligible after serving at least 25% of his or her sentence if he or she was NOT convicted of a violent crime, drug trafficking, or as a habitual offender.

“The language of the bill, in fact, states precisely the opposite of what Bryant says it does,” said Johnson.

The only change the bill gave to habitual offenders under Mississippi law was that if a judge chose not to impose the current standard of a maximum sentence to three time offenders, then the reasons for not doing so must be put in writing. The habitual offender, however, would still NOT be eligible for parole.

“As the Governor of Mississippi, I must assume that Bryant is not incompetent,” Johnson continues. “However, his reasons don’t make any sense and contradict the very language of the bill. So, it makes me wonder what his real reasons are for vetoing a bill that the house, the senate, Democrats, and Republicans unanimously passed to give deserving Mississipians a second chance at life.”

For more information, call 601-353-8452 or visit www.naacpms.org.

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