



NICOLE R. GALLOWAY, CPA
Missouri State Auditor

May 17, 2017

The Honorable Eric R. Greitens
Office of the Missouri Governor
State Capitol, Room 216
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Dear Governor Greitens,

While numerous issues were raised about SB 43 in the General Assembly, I am specifically concerned the bill weakens protections for government whistleblowers. I ask you to veto this legislation.

As Auditor, it is my duty to hold government accountable by exposing wasteful spending. That is why my office operates a whistleblower hotline to allow Missourians to report waste, fraud, abuse, mismanagement, and potential illegal activity.

Audit staff investigate allegations made through this hotline. We take very seriously our need to protect whistleblower identities because the threat of retaliation is real. I fear SB 43 makes it much less likely whistleblowers will come forward to report public misconduct or corruption.

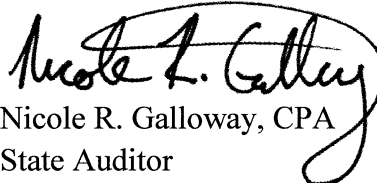
The so-called Whistleblower Protection Act specifically excludes employees of state and local government and public higher education institutions from protection against retaliation for reporting unlawful activity. This exclusion could allow state employees to be fired for reporting government activities that threaten public health or disclosing other malfeasance to the legislature, state auditor, attorney general, or any state entity charged with investigating alleged misconduct.

Additionally, employees who are requested by a public entity to come forward and provide evidence of government misconduct could be subject to firing. Conceivably, the Missouri Department of Corrections employees who were invited to testify before a House committee this past session about issues within the department could be fired for providing that testimony.

Government must operate with transparency, and that transparency necessarily must include a guarantee of protection for government employees reporting mismanagement of taxpayer dollars. Compromising protections for state employees who come forward with allegations of improper activity will allow government to increasingly operate in the shadows.

SB 43 means Missourians are less likely to see the elimination of wasteful practices that whistleblowers could expose. This will cost taxpayers money. In the interest of uncovering wasteful spending and deterring retaliation against those that expose government wrongdoing, I urge you to veto SB 43.

Sincerely,


Nicole R. Galloway, CPA
State Auditor