



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

April 27, 2012

Secretary Ken Detzner
Secretary of State
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building
500 S. Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

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Dear Secretary Detzner:

Over the past few weeks, I have spent a great deal of time considering the difficult issues included in House Bill 7129. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the significant efforts put into this bill by Speaker of the House Dean Cannon, Chairman Bill Proctor and other members of the Legislature. Their perspective and counsel on these difficult issues was very helpful throughout this process. Further, President Bernie Machen, President Eric Barron and members of the Board of Governors and the Boards of Trustees of the University of Florida and Florida State University have been very thoughtful in their advice with regard to this bill.

In weighing the issues associated with this legislation, my belief has become even stronger that our goal must be to methodically incentivize our universities to become first-class educational institutions, focused on producing graduates that will undertake and find great success in world changing activities here in our state. Additionally, it is also clear how difficult it is for our students, and in many cases their families, to afford the costs of higher education. I have strong concerns for the debt burden on our students and the number of graduates struggling to find jobs within their fields of study.

Many Floridians have offered very passionate advice on this issue. While this decision has not been easy, I do not feel that I can sign this bill into law without a more detailed plan to ensure the increased tuition requirements on Florida students will provide the return they and other Floridians need on their additional investment.

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By the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Florida, under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby veto and transmit my objections to House Bill 7129, enacted during the 114th Session of the Legislature of Florida, since statehood in 1845, during the Regular Session of 2012 and entitled:

An act relating to State Universities of Academic and Research Excellence
and National Preeminence...

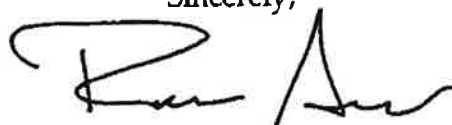
However, it is my intention to build momentum in moving the State University System toward excellence for the good of Florida, our families and our businesses. In order for this process to continue, it is first necessary to accomplish two very important steps:

1. The Board of Governors must develop a statewide plan for our State University System with a clear and distinct mission plan for each university tied to degree production and geographic location, including a plan for excellence in a reasonable time frame at each location.
2. The Board of Governors must initiate an operational review of each university to identify potential cost savings and efficiencies, with a plan to prioritize and implement the findings.

I look forward to the Board of Governors and the universities coming back with a very targeted plan so that we can better understand the return on an increased investment in our higher education system. Next week I too will initiate a further review of higher education options. With this information, we can begin creating a more exceptional higher education system that is well organized and focused on creating opportunities that will benefit all Floridians. Please allow me to once again thank all of the committed individuals that have offered me great insight and advice on this difficult bill. I have great respect for their work and look forward to working with them and all other concerned Floridians over the next year to continue to move Florida's higher education system toward excellence.

For the reasons stated above, I withhold my approval of House Bill 7129, and do hereby veto the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", written in a cursive style.

Rick Scott
Governor