

Court Orders Governor to Sign Request for \$700 Million to Fund ‘Monumentally Terrible Idea

Judges Side with Lawmakers Who Appoint Them

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The South Carolina Supreme Court ordered Governor Mark Sanford on Thursday, June 4, 2009, to request \$700 million in federal stimulus money. Sanford signed the request and numerous pages of assurances required by the federal government under protest and under orders from the South Carolina Supreme Court.

In his cover letter to Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, Gov. Sanford made it clear that he was not in lock-step with the circumstances being forced on him.

The Governor’s comments in part are quoted below:

“By order of the South Carolina Supreme Court, I am submitting the attached application for South Carolina’s portion of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. In doing so, however, I’d offer a few observations.

“First, it’s important to state one last time for the record what a monumentally terrible idea I believe the entire so-called stimulus act is, and why in particular utilizing this money as our General Assembly has done is ultimately going to cause more harm than good.

“In simplest form, this stimulus represents forcing taxpayers of tomorrow to pay for government services of today. No matter how well-intentioned it may be, borrowing from future generations who have no say in the matter is to me wrong, and strikes me as being akin to the same ‘taxation without representation’ that led to the formation of our Republic more than two centuries ago. We will never solve a problem created by too much debt with still more borrowing, and in fact will exacerbate our problems in the long run by devaluing the dollar, rendering any short-term stimulus moot.

“Compounding the problems brought by this destructive federal policy was the way it was implemented by our own legislature in South Carolina... I believe there will be less employment and opportunity as a result of the restructuring foregone and the spending incurred, due to appropriating this money...

“I want to make it clear that while I’m signing these documents under duress, I have no ability to promise that many of the mentioned conditions and guarantees will indeed be met. ...

“Our General Assembly may or may not choose to met those conditions at a later date – I have no way of knowing if they will and no way of compelling them to do so.

“In reviewing this application, for me it again highlighted the absurdity of ramrodding federal dollars into the states when I suspect more governors than myself have little ability or wherewithal to say with certainty that these and other conditions under the law can, or will, be carried out. In this case it makes something of a mockery of the law itself given the conditions that were supposed to be a

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part of receiving these monies
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“Finally, I would appeal to you in your capacity as Secretary of Education to look beyond this idea of money being a cure for all that ails education in our country... We need to give children real options for exiting schools that have consistently failed despite more and more money.... We need transferability options under federal laws that expand educational choices not only in the public sector, but in the private sector as well. My administration would certainly welcome a chance to work with you on these fronts, and I hope to do so in the near future.”