

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by Section 11 of Article VI of the Oklahoma Constitution, I have vetoed Enrolled Senate Bill 1496.

While this bill contains several positive administrative updates to the operations of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI), I cannot approve the provision authorizing the Director to accept gifts from public or private sources.

The OSBI serves as the State's premier independent investigative agency. Its credibility, and the public's trust in its work, depends on its impartiality, independence, and freedom from undue influence. Allowing the Director to directly solicit or accept gifts presents a significant risk to that impartiality. Those under investigation, or those with a stake in the outcome, could seek to influence the investigation through financial donations. Even where no actual impropriety occurs, the mere appearance that outside individuals or entities could provide financial support to an investigative body undermines public confidence in the fairness and objectivity of its investigations.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Enrolled Senate Bill 1496.