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Subject: Blue Line - Reduction Veto

Attachments: (2012-03-01) Blue Line Amendment (v01).doc

Quick overview - all veto powers are not created equal. For instance, there are some states that don't have line-item power at all. In other states, there are different forms of an "amendatory veto," which is a term that can describe a couple different options. In all cases, the ultimate power still rests with a state's legislature to either accept a Governor's revisions or else to override and let the original text become law. This is an important point for folks to remember.

A pure amendatory veto allows a Governor to insert new language into a bill, and then return that to the legislature to either accept or reject via override. This is relatively uncommon and is beyond what we'd request anyway.

The reduction veto is one that lets a Governor strike a line (this is often called "blue-lining") in an appropriations bill and insert a lower dollar amount instead (never higher). Then this lower amount goes back to the legislature - they can either accept this lower amount, or else override, and revert to the amount originally appropriated.

A reduction veto would require a constitutional amendment - I drafted the attached text a while ago, which I think does the job (although I'm always glad to get comments, suggestions, etc.).

Stateline.org (Pew) used to have a couple of maps online which showed which states had which form(s) of vetoes. The original story is online, but the maps are gone now. There were a total of 16 states with either a reduction veto or an amendatory veto (which may be exercised as a reduction veto). They are:

Alabama
Alaska
California
Illinois
Maine
Massachusetts
Michigan
Montana
Nebraska
New Jersey
Pennsylvania
South Dakota
Tennessee
Virginia
West Virginia
Wisconsin

If there are questions, just let me know. Thanks.

CLS

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