



**HENRY McMASTER**  
GOVERNOR

February 28, 2017

The Honorable Kevin L. Bryant  
President of the Senate  
State House, First Floor, East Wing  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Senate:

I am vetoing and returning without my approval R-2, S. 310, which seeks to allow the Town of Camden to annex, by ordinance but absent petition, a specific parcel of commercial real property upon a unilateral determination that the property is blighted. Notwithstanding the bill's reference to "the exigencies of this particular situation," S. 310's proposed solution invades the province of Kershaw County and risks creating a dangerous and unconstitutional precedent of "condemnation by annexation." Therefore, I am compelled to veto S. 310 as unconstitutional local legislation.

The present bill purports to "establish[] a constitutional classification of certain blighted property," consisting of a single shopping center in unincorporated Kershaw County, in an attempt by the Town of Camden to circumvent standard municipal annexation procedures. However, such a measure represents unconstitutional special legislation in contravention of article III, section 34 of the South Carolina Constitution, which expressly prohibits the General Assembly from enacting local or special laws "where a general law can be made applicable." S.C. Const. art. III, § 34(IX). Likewise, because this bill pertains only to the Town of Camden, it clearly violates article VIII, section 10's directive that "[n]o laws for a specific municipality shall be enacted." S.C. Const. art. VIII, § 10. Moreover, with regard to municipal annexation, the South Carolina Constitution specifically states that "[t]he General Assembly shall provide by general law the criteria and the procedures . . . for the readjustment of municipal boundaries," and further admonishes that "[n]o local or special law shall be enacted for these purposes." S.C. Const. art. VIII, § 8. Accordingly, because S. 310 applies only to a particular municipality and piece of property and does not satisfy any recognized exception to the constitutional prohibition on local legislation, I must veto this measure as unconstitutional.

For the foregoing reasons, I am respectfully returning R-2, S. 310 without my signature.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Henry McMaster".

Henry McMaster