

April 19, 2017

The Honorable Bill Haslam
Office of the Governor
1st Floor, State Capitol
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Haslam:

On behalf of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), a Washington, DC-based Section 501(c)(6) organization representing more than 34,000 association executives and industry partners from nearly 10,000 tax-exempt organizations, I respectfully request that your office veto legislation that would require state licensing boards for each occupation to create unique ethics rules for Tennessee professionals (Senate Bill 449).

This bill potentially puts additional unnecessary burdens on all state licensed professionals in Tennessee, and may cause Tennessee professionals to be out of compliance with nationally recognized standards for their vocation. The bill will likely cause a tremendous amount of regulatory work for the state boards, and potentially litigation should the regulations impose duties on professionals which are inconsistent with recognized standards. It will also likely cause substantial confusion within these professions, which ultimately may raise costs and not otherwise serve the interests of all the people of Tennessee. We do not believe that the impacts of this bill were fully considered by the legislature and we urge you to veto Senate Bill 449.

In addition, this bill threatens to give rise to state-sanctioned discrimination in Tennessee, as demonstrated by the legislation aimed at the counseling profession last year. Proponents of these kinds of bills may think they are narrowly focused on ethics, but the reality is that they broadcast an unflattering message about the state in general and its treatment of all individuals who reside in or visit the state.

For these reasons, we urge you not to sign this bill and instead work with state lawmakers to affirm the fundamental rights and protections all Tennesseans and visitors to the state deserve.

Sincerely,



John H. Graham IV, FASAE, CAE
President and CEO

cc: Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the Senate Randy McNally, Senate Speaker Pro Tempore Jim Tracy, Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, Senate Minority Leader Lee Harris, Speaker of the House Beth Harwell, House Speaker Pro Tempore Curtis Johnson, House Majority Leader Glen Casada, House Minority Leader Craig Fitzhugh