



NICOLE R. GALLOWAY, CPA
Missouri State Auditor

February 3, 2020

The Honorable Michael L. Parson
Office of the Governor
State Capitol Building
201 W. Capitol Avenue, Room 216
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear Governor Parson:

I was encouraged to hear your recent public comments denouncing dark money and its influence in Jefferson City.¹ Your position on this topic to the assembled Missouri media outlets was clear -- you oppose dark money and you want Missourians to know who are making such contributions. Therefore, I am renewing my call that you take action to root out dark money's influence in state government.

At our first meeting in June 2018, we discussed the need to restore the public's trust in their government. I highlighted the importance of removing the shadow of dark money over state contracting. Specifically, I referenced legislation sponsored by Sen. Scott Sifton requiring any person or company entering into a public contract for more than \$5,000 to disclose annual payments greater than \$500 made to a 501(c)(4) not-for-profit organization.² The legislation also would have required anyone with more than a 10 percent interest in the contracting company to disclose their payments of more than \$500 to such a not-for-profit. As we discussed at the time, the legislation didn't even get a committee hearing during that legislative session.

Because of such legislative inaction, I suggested you issue an executive order ensuring transparency when it comes to the role of dark money in securing government contracts.³ Unfortunately, you chose not to act. When the 2019 legislative session began, I again worked with Sen. Sifton to have similar legislation reintroduced. And again, that bill never received a committee hearing.⁴

During last year's legislative session an actual illustration of dark money's influence within state government was exposed. Specifically, a group was established to push legislation weakening protections from sexual assault on college campuses. Media reports uncovered a trail of correspondence and strategy memos between lawmakers and the lobbyist who formed the group. Most troubling to transparency advocates, was the revelation that this dark money group was funded by an individual who owns a company that was awarded multiple state government contracts.

¹ Keller, Rudi. "Gov. Parson weighs in on Missouri redistricting battle." *Columbia Daily Tribune*, January 30, 2020. <https://www.columbiatribune.com/news/20200130/gov-parson-weighs-in-on-missouri-redistricting-battle>

² S.B. 1060 (2018).

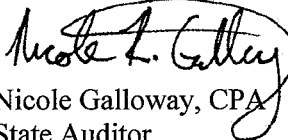
³ Letter of June 6, 2019.

⁴ S.B. 148 (2019).

For the third year in a row, Sen. Sifton's legislation has been filed.⁵ Your expressed opposition to dark money leads to the natural assumption that you will now make this a legislative priority. At the very least, you should issue an executive order clarifying your administration's stance on the subject, consistent with your recent comments.

We can both agree that Missourians want and deserve a transparent, honest and efficient government. But, they need leadership on these issues in order to make such expectations a reality.

Sincerely,



Nicole L. Galloway, CPA
State Auditor

⁵ S.B. 735.