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HOUSE SPEAKER PRO TEM KILLS BILL REQUIRING DISCLOSURE OF TAXPAYER MONEY GOING TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Montgomery – House Minority Leader Mike Hubbard on Tuesday said the death of a bill requiring elected officials to publicly disclose employment with the state shows Democrats are not serious about improving ethical standards and cleaning up obvious flaws in the two-year college system and other state agencies in Montgomery.

While working through a “ten-minute calendar” on Tuesday, House Speaker Pro Tem Demetrius Newton successfully killed a bill by Rep. Mike Ball (R – Madison) that requires elected officials to notify the Secretary of State’s Office and report any employment or contracts with the state that they or their spouse might have.

The secretary is then required to post the information, along with the exact description of the state employment, the state contract and the specific compensation, on the Secretary of State’s website.

Ball said the House Bill 510 was drafted in response to media reports of elected officials receiving thousands of dollars in contracts and compensation from various community colleges and other entities. He noted that the jobs often include vague descriptions and duties and that officials with two-year schools have said contracting with lawmakers often leads to higher budget appropriations.

“It is time to shine some light on the sweetheart deals enjoyed by a handful of legislators and their family members, but apparently the Democrats have another idea,” Ball said. “Instead of letting taxpayers see how their dollars are being spent, the Democrats are content to let the good ol’ boy backroom politics operate as usual.”

Hubbard pointed out that Newton, who referred to Ball’s bill as “absurd,” also served as sponsor of a resolution that provided legislators with a 62 percent pay raise at the beginning of the session.

“It is ironic that the same person who sponsored a controversial legislative pay raise would single-handedly kill a bill that requires lawmakers to disclose their other sources of taxpayer money,” Hubbard said. “Republicans believe we need more transparency in how state government operates, not less. We need more disclosure of how taxpayer dollars are being spent, not less. We should force public officials to hold themselves to a higher ethical standard whenever possible. The Democrats, by their actions today, show they believe the opposite.”