

PHILIP B. SCOTT
Governor



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

October 12, 2020

The Honorable John Bloomer, Jr.
Secretary of the Senate
115 State House
Montpelier, VT 05633-5401

Dear Mr. Bloomer:

I have signed S.254, *An act relating to union organizing*, with the concerns expressed below. It is my hope that the Legislature will take another look at what I believe is an erosion of personal privacy rights in the upcoming legislative session.

Public employees hired before the effective date of this legislation have been assured their personal e-mail addresses, home and personal cellular telephone numbers are kept confidential by their employer. This Legislation reverses that expectation of privacy by forwarding this information to a private organization for its own purposes, which includes political purposes – and there is no ability for an employee to opt out.

This portion of S.254 appears to contradict the policy direction of the Legislature, which has enacted greater protections for the privacy interests of individuals. For example, in recent years, the Legislature clarified home phone numbers and e-mail addresses collected for the voter checklist were to be kept confidential. The Legislature has also put limitations, including data security requirements, on private corporations that harvest this sort of data and the disclosure of personal information by state agencies and departments such as the Department of Motor Vehicles. I support this policy direction and before personal information is required to be disclosed to private entities, sufficient data security protections should be in place as well as an opt-out for those who do not wish this personal information to be shared.

Again, these provisions of S.254 are of great concern and inconsistent with the views of a large majority of Vermonters. I urge the Legislature to amend this law in January and allow individuals to determine what personal information they wish to divulge on their own.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. B. Scott", written over a long horizontal line that extends across the page.

Philip B. Scott
Governor