STATE OF ARIZONA

JANICE K. BREWER
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

May 23, 2013

The Honorable Andy Biggs
President of the Senate
Arizona State Senate
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: Senate Bill 1178 (exercise of religion; definition)

Dear President Biggs,

Today, I vetoed Senate Bill 1178, legislation that would have amended the definition of exercise of religion. The bill also would have allowed persons to assert likely claims, rather than actual claims, and would allow the assertion of claims regardless of whether the government is a party to the proceeding.

I regret being forced to write this letter. The transmission of these bills has left me little choice but to exercise the clear terms of a bill moratorium I enacted more than two weeks ago. At that time, I warned that I would not sign additional measures into law until we see resolution of the two most pressing issues facing us: adoption of a Fiscal 2014 State Budget and plan for Medicaid. It is disappointing I must demonstrate the moratorium was not an idle threat.

The Arizona Legislature has now been in session for 130 days. We have just five weeks until the end of the fiscal year, by which time it is necessary that the State of Arizona have a new budget in place in order to assure there is no suspension of critical services or programs.

Arizonans enrolled in the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) face a different sort of deadline. Without legislative action, an estimated 63,000 AHCCCS members will lose their coverage on January 1, 2014. Fortunately, this need not happen. We have a Medicaid Restoration Plan that will maintain coverage for those in need, honor the will of Arizonans who have twice voted to expand Medicaid, save our General Fund, keep Arizona tax dollars in Arizona and protect rural and safety-net hospitals.

I respectfully ask that legislators join me to resolve our budgetary and health care challenges. Once these priority issues are behind us, I am happy to once again consider unrelated legislation.

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These concerns are among the primary reasons I have vetoed Senate Bill 1178.

Sincerely,

Janice K. Brewer
Governor

cc: The Honorable Andy Tobin
The Honorable Steve Yarbrough