



STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

March 31, 2016

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

Re: Senate Bill 1197 (schools; cursive writing requirement)

Dear President Biggs:

I vetoed SB1197. While I strongly believe that cursive handwriting must be taught in our public schools, there's already a process in place to ensure this happens. In March 2015, I directed the State Board to review, revise and replace the state's academic standards with input by Arizona parents, teachers, principals and content experts. The State Board of Education and the Arizona Department of Education are currently working collaboratively to that end and they have engaged the public from every corner of the state with community meetings and through thousands of online and written public comments. My expectation is that these new standards should outperform the ones already adopted but also reflect the skills that we believe Arizona students should possess.

I have communicated to the State Board of Education that the new academic standards must include instruction in cursive reading and writing and that by the 5th grade, students should be able to read and write documents through legible cursive handwriting.

I want to make it very clear that I do not agree with others who proclaim that handwriting is a "lost art" or a "relic of the past." Research shows a link between stronger handwriting skills and pedagogical benefit, including increased cognitive and learning development, brain activation, letter recognition and greater reading coherence. For students who struggle with diminished fine motor skills and/or reading impairments, cursive writing can be an effective learning tool. And for many, handwriting also allows a process of reflection that can lead to better understanding and memory encoding.

I'd like to express my appreciation to Senator Griffin for bringing this bill forward and ensuring that we do not forget the importance of teaching cursive handwriting skills in a student's course of academic study.

Sincerely,

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor
State of Arizona

cc: The Honorable David Gowan
The Honorable Gail Griffin