

Stumbo questions validity of governor's vetoes



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(Photo: Dylan Buell, Special to The C.J.)

FRANKFORT, Ky. - House Speaker Greg Stumbo is raising questions about the validity of vetoes issued on Wednesday by Gov. Matt Bevin (/story/news/politics/ky-governor/2016/04/28/15-significant-bills-bevin-vetoed-week/83648538/) and says he could take the matter to court.

But Steve Pitt, the general counsel for the Governor's Office, said Friday, "There is no question as to the validity" of the vetoes. "While we respect the speaker's interest in these vetoes, we do not take his comments seriously."

Stumbo, a Prestonsburg Democrat, told the Lexington Herald-Leader in an interview this week that one concern he has is that the vetoes were signed and dated on Wednesday April 27 - when the governor was in

Europe on an economic development trip.

Stumbo told the newspaper he believes the vetoes require an original signature on the specified date and "I don't think he can delegate that authority."

The speaker said another problem is that some of the items Bevin vetoed from the budget bill do not contain a message explaining his reason for the veto.

Stumbo said he and his staff are researching these and other concerns related to vetoes as well as their legal options if they determine that any vetoes were filed improperly.

But Pitt said in an interview with The Courier-Journal on Friday there is no legal problem caused by the fact that the vetoes were signed by Bevin's autopen on Bevin's authority. Pitt said that there actually is no requirement in the Kentucky Constitution, state law, or case law that requires a governor to sign a veto.

In the case of Bevin's vetoes of all or parts of seven bills Wednesday, Pitt said, "While the governor has been in Europe this week on an economic development mission, he has worked diligently considering bills for veto, and on veto message language, and has been in regular contact with staff here. And staff here were directly authorized by him to use the autopen to affix his signature."

Pitt said, "The governor delegated no substantive authority to anyone here. He made the decisions entirely on his own."

A review of Bevin's seven-page veto of more than two dozen specific items or phrases items in the state budget bill shows that five vetoed parts are not directly followed by a message explaining the reason for the veto.



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(<http://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/politics/ky-governor/2016/04/28/15-significant-bills-bevin-vetoed-week/83648538/>)

Pitt said that the Kentucky Constitution requires Bevin to file a veto message. Bevin did that and it lists his reasoning for most of the rejected budget items, Pitt said, but the governor is not required to list his reasoning for each and every vetoed budget item.

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