

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5873-S

May 17, 1991

To the Honorable, the Senate
of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to section 2 Substitute Senate Bill No. 5873 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to insurance coverage for retired and disabled school district employees."

Section 2 of this bill requires the Health Care Authority to conduct a study of considerable importance to retirees of the public school system and public policy makers. However, the bill does not provide that agency with either additional staff or adequate funds to support such an effort. The Fiscal Note reveals estimated costs of at least \$140,000.00 for the study. Funds for the agency to do the study do not appear in the operating budgets proposed by either the House or the Senate during the Regular Session and I cannot sign into law a requirement that would put the Health Care Authority at such risk.

I believe that a study of this nature should be undertaken, but not in the manner proposed. At the very least it should address the question of costs and access to health care benefits by the retirees of all public agencies, not just those in the public school system. The costs and needs of the respective public agencies must also be considered. It is unlikely that the comprehensive study that I believe to be necessary could be completed in only a four- to six- month time frame. The public policy issues are too important and the welfare of far too many individuals is at risk for this task to be addressed too hurriedly or on a piecemeal basis.

For the reasons stated, I have vetoed section 2 of Substitute Senate Bill No. 5873.

With the exception of section 2, Substitute Senate Bill No. 5873 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Booth Gardner
Governor