

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 2781-S

March 30, 1996

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to section 2, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2781 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to veterans' benefits;"

Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2781 amends statutes that give preference in public employment to veterans who have served during specific armed conflicts since the Vietnam era. This bill also adds categories of veterans to those who currently receive preferences.

Section 1 of the bill recognizes veterans who have served in armed conflicts since 1975 for the purpose of receiving public employment preferences in the form of additional percentage points on competitive and promotional exams. I am very supportive of this portion of the bill, which provides well-deserved recognition to these men and women.

Because section 2 of Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2781 contains substantial ambiguities which would make implementation extremely difficult, I have reluctantly vetoed this section. Furthermore, inconsistent interpretation and application by the public entities covered by the statute would make application of this section unnecessarily susceptible to legal challenges. Clear and consistent laws are particularly critical for those programs granting rights and benefits to any identified group.

The legislature should make the updating of these statutes relating to our state's veterans an early priority in the next legislative session. Carefully tailored language based on the goals of this legislation should be enacted at the earliest opportunity.

For these reasons, I have vetoed section 2 of Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2781.

With the exception of section 2, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2781 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Lowry  
Governor