

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 6544-S2

April 1, 1998

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 18, 19, 20 and 21, Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6544 entitled:
"AN ACT Relating to improving long-term care;"

2SSB 6544 takes care of many issues dealing with adult family homes, boarding homes and long-term care, and, most importantly, transfers the oversight of boarding homes from the Department of Health to the Department of Social and Health Services. This is well-conceived and ambitious legislation, and will go far toward ensuring the safety and quality of care for residents of our adult family and boarding homes.

Sections 18, 19, 20, and 21 would specify when residents of boarding and adult family homes who become bedbound as the result of illness must be seen by a licensed practitioner, and define those practitioners and their duties. While I agree with the intentions of those sections, they would conflict with current patients' rights to refuse treatment and to maintain their preferred residences. Also, those sections are unclear as to provider and resident responsibilities when disagreements arise from such conflicts. Additionally, the impact on people's abilities to pay for additional service has not been analyzed. Before implementing changes in care requirements, additional comment needs to be sought from residents, families and all interested parties, as well as the joint task force created by this bill.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 18, 19, 20 and 21 of Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6544.

With the exception of sections 18, 19, 20 and 21, Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6544 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor