

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 1444-S

March 27, 2002

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 3, Substitute House Bill No. 1444 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to preventing harassment, intimidation, or bullying in schools;"

Substitute House Bill No. 1444 requires each school district to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student. Our schools should be safe places, conducive to learning, where all students can learn without fear. I strongly support this bill, which will help ensure that parents, teachers and students take bullying seriously.

Section 3 of the bill would have required each school district to report all incidents resulting in disciplinary action involving harassment, intimidation, or bullying. "Incident" and "disciplinary action" are not defined terms. If every counseling session, intervention, detention or parent conference that resulted from a bullying incident were required to be reported, the burden would be overwhelming, and could serve as a disincentive for educators to take action except in the most egregious cases.

For these reasons, I have vetoed section 3 of Substitute House Bill No. 1444.

With the exception of section 3, Substitute House Bill No. 1444 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor