

VETO MESSAGE ON 1995-S

May 7, 2001

To the Honorable Speakers and Members,

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

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to section 4, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1995 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to civil forfeitures of property;"

Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1995 provides needed reform to our civil forfeiture laws. This bill will provide greater protection to citizens whose property is subject to seizure by law enforcement agencies. Drug dealers should not be allowed to benefit from their illegally gotten wealth, but we must not sacrifice citizens' rights in our efforts to fight drug trafficking.

Section 4 of the bill establishes a workgroup of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees, including legislative and non-legislative members, to evaluate Washington's civil forfeiture laws and practices, and report back to the legislative committees by December 1, 2001. I believe such a workgroup will be very useful and can continue examining the issues involved in the forfeiture laws. However, there is simply no need to establish the workgroup in statute. I urge the committees to use their inherent power to establish this workgroup, so that it can perform its intended functions within the intended time period, without enactment of a statute.

For these reasons, I have vetoed section 4 of Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1995.

With the exception of section 4, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1995 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor