

VETO MESSAGE ON ESSB 6167

June 26, 2001

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 section 18, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6167 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to actuarial funding of state retirement systems;"

This bill establishes long-term economic assumptions and contribution rates for the state pension funds. These are matters of great concern to both working and retired members of the retirement systems and for the state as a whole. Implementing these assumptions requires a high level of expertise and appropriate input from those with the experience and skills to ensure the credibility and accountability of the process.

Section 18 would have abolished the pension funding work group entirely, and transferred staffing responsibility to the state actuary. This approach would have reduced the amount of expertise and input available and would have eroded confidence in the reliability of the pension system.

I agree with members of the Legislature that the current process could be better, and am willing to work with them on another solution.

For these reasons, I have vetoed section 18 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6167.

With the exception of section 18, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6167 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor