

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5244-S

May 16, 1995

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 1, 4, 5, and 6, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5244 entitled: "AN ACT Relating to the definition of "dependent child" for purposes of aid to families with dependent children;"

The primary goal of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5244 is to provide information and support to parents whose children have chosen to leave home. Letting parents know, in appropriate situations, that their child is safe, living with a relative, and receiving public assistance benefits is an important improvement to children's services. It is equally important to let these parents know that family reconciliation services are available. This policy is parallel to the provisions which encourage parental notification contained in Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5439 (the Becca Bill), previously enacted into law, and to the Runaway Hotline which facilitates family reconciliation through the provision of information about services available to families.

However, this bill also relieves parents, whose child has left home without their permission, from the obligation to financially support that child if the child is receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The state of Washington expects all parents to provide their children with care, support, and guidance. This obligation extends to cases where circumstances are such that a child leaves the parental home, moves in with a relative, and receives AFDC. There is no justification for requiring the taxpayer to support these children and not look to their parents for a contribution to this cost.

For this reason, I am vetoing sections 1, 4, 5, and 6 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5244.

With the exception of sections 1, 4, 5, and 6, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5244 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Lowry
Governor