

VETO MESSAGE ON ESHB 3079

March 27, 2006

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,
The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning, without my approval as to Section 3, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 3079 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to health care services."

I support ESHB 3079, an act providing information about our Basic Health Plan and Medical Assistance programs. I am, however, vetoing section 3 of this act, which includes an unnecessary null and void clause.

In signing ESHB 3079, I express a cautionary note as to the interpretation of the reports that it requires to be developed. The employer information to be provided by the Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is not a requirement for enrollment or eligibility. Consequently, data contained in the reports will have been provided on a voluntary basis, and will be unverified. The two reports - an employer-specific report and an aggregated report - will originate from separate sources. Therefore, they will not be comparable. The reports will also be based on a point-in-time data collection and will therefore not reflect changes in employment status. These data limitations must be considered when interpreting the reports.

It is equally important to note that the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) study due in July 2006 will report Basic Health employment status and employer information in more detail than the aggregated report required by this bill.

It is my hope that the information collected and provided to the Legislature in accordance with ESHB 3079 will not be misconstrued to portray beneficiaries of our Basic Health and Medicaid programs in a negative light. These programs are designed to provide health care services to eligible, often working, enrollees. I am confident that they are meeting that intent.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Section 3 of Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 3079.

With the exception of Section 3, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 3079 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor