

VETO MESSAGE ON ESSB 5785

May 18, 2015

To the Honorable President and Members,  
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5785 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to the definition of official duties of state officers."

This bill changes definition of official duty for a state officer holding an elective office in the state Ethics Act. The definition is expanded to mean not only those duties prescribed in the state Constitution, state statutes or agency rules, legislatively funded or mandated authority and responsibilities, but also any activities described in an agency's strategic plan and tasks or action directly related to carrying out the state officer's other official duties.

I believe this is an unnecessary change to the Ethics Act. First, this legislation creates a different standard of ethics for elected officials. While they have different roles, I believe all public employees should be held to the same rules. Moreover, elected officials - as head of agencies - already define much of their job duties. There is no need to create an expanded definition of official duty. By doing so, we unnecessarily risk endangering the public's trust.

For these reasons I have vetoed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5785 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jay Inslee  
Governor