

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 3103-S

April 1, 2004

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

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to section 13, Substitute House Bill No. 3103 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to higher education;"

Substitute House Bill No. 3103 refines the roles and responsibilities of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to more clearly focus on appropriate administrative and policy functions, and relieves the board of duties that are either outdated or unnecessary.

Section 13 of the bill would have authorized the HECB to manage a competitive process for awarding high demand enrollments that both public baccalaureate institutions and private independent institutions would have been eligible for. In this time of fiscal restraint, we should first direct our limited state resources to providing opportunities for students to fill existing capacity in public institutions before allowing private independent institutions to compete for state enrollment funds.

Given the demographic pressure on the higher education system in the next few years, we cannot ignore the important role that independent colleges and universities can play in meeting student demand. I believe, however, that the state must carefully consider all options before implementing such a significant change in fiscal policy for higher education. Thus, I am directing the HECB to work with the Office of Financial Management and key stakeholders to develop options for utilizing capacity in private independent institutions to help meet student demand for access to higher education.

For these reasons, I have vetoed section 13 of Substitute House Bill No. 3103.

With the exception of section 13, Substitute House Bill No. 3103 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor