

VETO MESSAGE ON 2SSB 5459

June 15, 2011

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

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning, without my approval as to Sections 7 and 11,
Second Substitute Senate Bill 5459 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to services for people with
developmental disabilities."

This bill makes a number of changes that address the increased provision of services to persons with developmental disabilities in community settings. It reduces admissions to residential habilitation centers, closes the Frances Haddon Morgan Center by December 31, 2011, provides for relocation and alternatives, and strengthens the array of support available in communities.

Section 7 of this bill mandates that the Department of Social and Health Services provide a series of processes and services that assist successful client transitions into the community. Most provisions in this section are current practices within the Department, including the following: person-centered approaches to discharge plans, family mentoring, offering residential habilitation center employees opportunities for employment in community settings, offering residents leaving a residential habilitation center the ability to return, and maximizing federal funding. Approval of Section 7 is not required to implement these approaches. However, Section 7(2)(f)(vii) could be interpreted to mandate that the Department provide new transportation services and other supports to assist family and friends in maintaining regular contact with residents who have moved out of a residential habilitation center. While I agree that clients should maintain contact with their family and friends, this subsection could create a broad, undefined requirement that is also unfunded. The type, frequency, and costs of transportation are not easily assessed. Because these unknown elements present serious concerns about unanticipated fiscal impacts, I am vetoing Section 7.

Section 11 mandates that the Department annually submit a report to the Legislature regarding persons who have transitioned from residential habilitation centers to the community. Much of the information required for this report is already gathered as a standard part of the client assessment and existing quality assurances processes. Aggregating and

assembling client-specific information into a new report is a significant unfunded mandate.

Although I am vetoing this section, I am directing the Department to share the various reports related to the quality of client transitions and community-based services with the Legislature.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Sections 7 and 11 of Second Substitute Senate Bill 5459.

With the exception of Sections 7 and 11, Second Substitute Senate Bill 5459 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Gregoire
Governor