

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5652

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 3, 4, and 5, Senate Bill No. 5652 entitled:  
"AN ACT Relating to welfare fraud;"

Senate Bill No. 5652 addresses the issue of welfare fraud and provides that persons convicted under RCW 74.08.331 will be ineligible to receive public assistance for a specified period. Sections 3, 4, and 5 require the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to reinstate the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement (SAVE) program. DSHS's past experience with this program has established that it is an inefficient and costly method of identifying fraudulent applications for assistance. Furthermore, the federal government has, through several agencies, come to the same conclusion: the SAVE program costs about twice as much as is saved. This has been verified by the General Accounting Office and DSHS. Washington is one of many states that has decided this program is ineffective.

This state is in no way supportive of granting benefits to illegal immigrants who are not eligible for assistance. DSHS currently has effective mechanisms in place to identify fraud of this kind. Elaborate systems exist throughout interagency agreements with the Social Security Administration and the Immigration and Naturalization Service which double check immigration status to ensure recipients are eligible for service. The SAVE program will not serve to enhance those efforts.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 3, 4, and 5 of Senate Bill No. 5652.

With the exception of sections 3, 4, and 5, Senate Bill No. 5652 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Lowry  
Governor