

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5274-S

May 19, 1997

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. 5274 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to disclosure of students' social security numbers;"

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides strong safeguards of individual privacy:

- Schools may not require a student or parent to provide a student's social security number;
- Schools may not penalize a student or parent for not providing a social security number; and
- Schools may not release a student's social security number without consent.

I have no objection to putting these important safeguards in state as well as federal law. However, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5274 goes beyond the federal safeguards by prohibiting schools from *requesting* social security numbers (with limited exceptions).

This legislation would prohibit using social security numbers for:

- Student identification numbers;
- Positive identification of two or more students with the same name;
- Following student movement between schools; and
- Tracking the college experience and employment of high school graduates.

In December of 1995 the Superintendent of Public Instruction adopted an official policy on Privacy and Confidentiality. In 1996 the Superintendent also distributed a suggested privacy and confidentiality policy for all school districts. I believe these policies, in conjunction with federal requirements, protect the privacy of Washington citizens.

I too have deep concerns about public and private entities requesting social security numbers. I welcome the legislature engaging in a comprehensive review of the use of social security numbers within our society and would join in efforts to restrict to whom social security numbers can be disseminated.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5274 in its entirety.

I am hereby returning, without my approval, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5274.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Locke  
Governor