

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 6208-S

April 2, 1998

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 2, 3, 5, 10, 41 and 42, Substitute Senate Bill 6208 entitled:  
"AN ACT Relating to at-risk youth;"

This bill clarifies the processes for the admission of a child for mental health or chemical dependency treatment. It clearly separates the procedures for voluntary outpatient and inpatient treatment, parent-initiated treatment and court-authorized involuntary treatment. Safeguards are provided for inpatient mental health and chemical dependency treatment, including an independent review by a mental health or chemical dependency professional, the opportunity for a child to petition the court for review, and automatic release from a facility unless a court allows the child to be retained for further treatment.

Sections 2, 3 and 5 relate to the Department of Social and Health Services contracting with counties for the operation of staff secure group homes. Section 2 would require DSHS to transfer funds to counties to operate these homes based on a formula that is inconsistent with other formulae related to at-risk youth. Section 3 would incorrectly change state child welfare duties to include providing funding to counties to staff these homes. Section 5 apparently would require counties, which would be subcontracting with the state, to in turn subcontract with private vendors to provide staff secure group homes for certain youth. DSHS already contracts for such services, so that section is unnecessary.

Section 10 would require DSHS to report to the Legislature annually on the number of parent-initiated admissions of minors to evaluation and treatment facilities. A costly hospital record review would be needed to gather such information, but no funding was provided.

Sections 41 and 42 would amend the law relating to unlawful harboring of a minor child. The language is redundant with existing law and may lump together effective shelters for youth with those individuals who prey upon them.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 2, 3, 5, 10, 41 and 42 of Substitute Senate Bill No. 6208.

With the exception of sections 2, 3, 5, 10, 41 and 42, Substitute Senate Bill No. 6208 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Locke  
Governor