

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 6214-S2

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 55 and 60, Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6214 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to mental illness;"

2SSB 6214 broadens the Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) commitment standards to take greater account of a history of violence. Among other things, it requires greater information sharing between treatment providers and criminal justice agencies, and creates mechanisms to protect public safety in the context of ITA treatment.

Section 55 of 2SSB 6214 would require the Department of Corrections to report annually to legislative fiscal committees on the efficacy of the regional support networks in implementing this legislation, including information on their administrative costs. While such reporting has value, DOC has neither the audit authority, the specialized expertise, nor the funding to perform this task. The bill already requires evaluations and reports by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

Section 60 would cause the entire act to expire on June 30, 2001. "Sunset" provisions can be valuable, but this would be too soon. This complex new law will be difficult to implement and may well require revision in the years to come. The studies required by the Institute for Public Policy and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee can help identify problems and opportunities for improvement.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 55 and 60 of Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6214.

With the exception of sections 55 and 60, Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6214 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor