

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5903-S

May 20, 2003

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 section 1, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5903 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to juvenile offender sentences;"

This bill creates two new alternative juvenile sentences, and a pilot project for a third sentencing alternative.

Section 1 prohibits the closure of any Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration institution "without specific authorization in an act of the legislature." It further prohibits the use of any such institution, even if closed by the Legislature, by the Department of Corrections or to incarcerate adult offenders. I share these policy goals of not closing state institutions without the Legislature's concurrence, and not converting juvenile facilities into adult prisons. I have not proposed any such closures or conversions.

However, the Legislature has not yet adopted a budget for the next biennium, and there is no assurance that its next budget, or some future budget, will not make it necessary to consider closures as a means of administering programs within available resources. The Legislature creates the programs and provides the resources, but the executive branch must administer them, and should not be prohibited in permanent law from making difficult decisions that may be necessary.

For this reason, I have vetoed section 1 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5903.

With the exception of section 1, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5903 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor