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Governor



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March 28, 2008

To the Honorable President and Members,  
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning, without my approval as to Section 1, Substitute Senate Bill 6743 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to autism awareness instruction for teachers of students with autism."

This bill provides for training and guidelines for teachers of students with autism.

Section 1 includes an extensive listing of items for an autism guidebook that is being developed by the Caring for Washington Individuals with Autism Task Force with staff support from the Department of Health. These items are very specific regarding possible strategies and activities that could be included to support children with autism in our public schools.

The OSPI already has a guide developed as a resource for both educators and parents, produced by the Autism Outreach Project, which maintains an informational web site as well as an e-mail address for communication with individuals with specific questions and concerns. I believe that this guide is the most appropriate document to address the many issues raised in Section 1.

Therefore, I have asked the OSPI to update its guide and to emphasize tools for parents to use. I have also asked that this updated guide be distributed to educational service districts, school districts, appropriate school employees and parent advocacy groups.

Additionally, I have asked the Professional Educator Standards Board and the OSPI to develop recommendations for autism awareness instruction and methods of teaching students with autism that will strengthen learning for students. The recommendations will address appropriate content in teacher preparation and professional development. These reports will be completed by December 1, 2008.

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For these reasons, I am vetoing Section 1 of Substitute Senate Bill 6743.

With the exception of Section 1, Substitute Senate Bill 6743 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Christine O. Gregoire

Governor