

July 26, 2019

To the Honorable Members of

The Illinois Senate,

101st General Assembly:

Today I veto Senate Bill 2026 from the 101st General Assembly, which would have amended the State Employees Group Insurance Act of 1971, the Illinois Insurance Code, and the Illinois Public Aid Code in a way that changes how the state can apply for waivers under federal statutes, including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (the “ACA”), the Social Security Act, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program Act. While this legislation was well intended, unfortunately it does not afford the state enough flexibility to operate these programs.

My administration is fully committed to ensuring Illinoisans can access the full array of federal assistance for health benefits, and to expanding access to high quality and affordable healthcare for all the residents of the State. Illinois mandates coverage for pre-existing conditions, and many of the Essential Health Benefits designated by the ACA — such as preventive and wellness services, maternity and newborn care, and mental health and substance use disorder services — are codified in state law. In addition, the Trump administration’s attacks on healthcare continue to create uncertainty in the health insurance marketplace.

One of my administration’s priorities is to create healthier communities by improving the health of all Illinoisans. With that goal in mind, I do not anticipate any circumstances in which my administration would pursue waivers to limit Illinoisans’ access to federal programs or benefits. Nonetheless, it’s critical to retain our flexibility to innovate and be responsive to the evolving healthcare needs of the people of the State.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 9(b) of Article IV of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return Senate Bill 2026, entitled “AN ACT concerning government,” with the forgoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

JB Pritzker