

July 29, 2011

To the Honorable Members of the Illinois Senate,
97th General Assembly:

In accordance with Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution, I hereby veto Senate Bill 178 from the 97th General Assembly.

As Governor, I am committed to ensuring that the members of the State Employee Group Insurance Program have access to quality health benefits. It is important we maintain the level of care employees expect and deserve, while also making the most cost-effective choices for taxpayers and the state of Illinois. The power to procure and execute contracts regarding group health lies with the executive branch, yet this bill grants the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (COGFA) authority to reject a proposed state health care contract. I cannot affix my signature to a bill that compromises important principles of separation of powers.

Further, this bill makes significant changes that limit transparency, competition and fairness in the procurement process. The current procurement process – which was passed overwhelmingly by the General Assembly – is designed to produce a non-political, competitive result based solely on the strength of vendors' proposals. The bill would result in an unacceptable potential for political interference in state procurement of health care services.

Politicization of the procurement process would have a detrimental effect on the state's ability to achieve quality health care at the best possible cost, and will undo the procurement reform and best practices achieved in SB51. If this bill were to become law, competitive bidding for health care in Illinois would cease; Illinois taxpayers and our employees, retirees and dependents deserve better.

Accordingly, I must return this bill without my approval. Therefore, pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return Senate Bill 178, entitled "AN ACT concerning government.", vetoed in its entirety with this statement of objections.

Sincerely,

PAT QUINN
Governor