

92GMSSB1859

State of Illinois
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Springfield, Illinois 62706

George H. Ryan
GOVERNOR

June 28, 2002

To the Honorable Members of
The Illinois Senate
92nd General Assembly

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby veto Senate Bill 1859 entitled "AN ACT concerning health benefits."

Senate Bill 1859 would amend the State Employees Group Insurance Act of 1971 by providing that beginning with Fiscal Year 2003 and subsequent years, eligible employees may elect not to participate in the program of health benefits as defined in this Act.

Senate Bill 1859 was introduced as a potential cost saving measure for the State during the present budgetary hardship as well as in the future. However, this legislation only allows current State employees to opt out. I have signed into law House Bill 5686, which contains virtually identical language with the exception that it includes both current employees and retirees. Allowing both employees and retirees to opt out of the State health insurance program would result in a higher estimated savings for the State. The Department of Central Management Services estimates that for every 1% of employees and retirees who opt out, the approximate savings would be \$8.6 million.

I believe that every effort should be made to save the State money during the current fiscal crisis. House Bill 5686 is more inclusive than Senate Bill 1859 and potentially will result in greater savings for the State.

For these reasons, I hereby veto and return Senate Bill 1859.

Sincerely,
George H. Ryan
GOVERNOR