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Policy

For Citizens

Press Office

The Administration

Lt. Governor

First Lady

The Honorable Don Samuelson
 President of the Senate
 120 State Capitol
 Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear President Samuelson:

I have vetoed and am returning to the legislature Chapter 118 (SF 2361).

As you know, I have repeatedly insisted that inserting controversial policy language regarding the 24-hour waiting period for abortion or other such restrictions will result in a veto. This warning was not heeded, and consequently important program funding is jeopardized by your action. The provisions in Chapter 118 encompassing women's right to know, funding cuts to base level family planning services and restrictions on who can deliver those services are unacceptable to me.

I am disappointed this bill does not make adequate strides in addressing the needs of children and families. Adoption assistance and relative custody assistance should be available to families who want to adopt special needs children; these children should not be left to linger in temporary foster care homes. Expanding health coverage for children should also be included.

A bill that restricts access to pre-pregnancy family planning services and at the same time does not fully support welfare recipients makes no sense. It is estimated that 80% of all adolescent mothers will receive government assistance sometime during the ten years following the birth of their first child. Significant

Current News:
Governor vetos HHS bill, which contained abortion language
Governor's message at news conference encourages legislators to get the people's business done by Monday

potential is lost and challenges greatly increased when youth become parents. I continue to believe that preventing teen pregnancy is the best investment to serve children and reduce reliance on welfare.

I want to strongly emphasize the importance of limited spending this session. I recognize this bill spends at levels that appear to support this charge. Unfortunately, there are some financing approaches in this bill that understate new spending. This bill breaks our agreement to set aside one-time tobacco payments to make improvements in our health care infrastructure. It also ignores my principle that TANF funds should be used to only further self-sufficiency. TANF funds should not be tapped to offset unrelated General Fund spending. In addition, I am concerned that some spending reductions in this bill cannot be implemented, and the costs of some policy changes have been ignored.

I am strongly committed to containing the size of government. That principle is clearly reflected in my budget. However, this cannot be achieved by simply reducing base level funding for agency salaries, health insurance, rent, and computer systems without reducing agency obligations. The size of government mirrors the complexity and numbers of programs in state law. Reductions in base funding for agencies must be supported by changes that simplify and reduce the costs of program administration. Otherwise, I expect agency funding to be provided at recommended levels.

Despite my objections to the above items, I want to make clear that I am in support of many priorities highlighted in this bill. The steps to achieve reform in long term care, reduce glaring health disparities between segments of the state's population, and improve mental health programs are important steps toward meaningful changes for the citizens of Minnesota.

I urge you to act in earnest to present a Health & Human Services bill that will benefit the citizens of Minnesota by your constitutional deadline of May 21, 2001.

Sincerely,

Jesse Ventura