

Veto No. 2

HB 1492

March 18, 1976

To the Honorable, the House of Representatives
of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

I return herewith, without my approval, House Bill No. 1492, Printer's No. 2568, entitled "An act amending the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177, No.175), entitled 'The Administrative Code of 1929,' limiting the assignment of school children."

This is the so-called "anti-busing" bill.

But it is not an anti-busing bill. Indeed, the word "busing" is never even mentioned in the bill itself.

H.B. 1492 is indeed a pro-busing bill, for it is nothing more than an anti-Human Relations Commission Bill, which would invite the Federal courts to step in and dictate the very busing program in Pennsylvania that this legislation supposedly would prevent.

On December 27th, 1974, I vetoed an almost identical bill.

Again, on July 22nd, 1975, I vetoed a similar measure.

That veto was soundly sustained by the State Senate.

Now, for the third time, let me state emphatically that the measures described in H.B. 1492 will never serve to advance the cause of education or of understanding and equality among our people.

I do not believe in Federally dictated busing forced upon our people by court order.

But that is exactly what this bill will produce.

In depriving the Human Relations Commission of its tools to find peaceful solutions for our schools, this bill would leave the proponents of integration no recourse but to appeal to the Federal courts, which would then take direct action. This would lead to a situation in Pennsylvania's cities similar to that which is now plaguing Boston.

House Bill 1492 would deprive the Human Relations Commission of every means to do its job, thereby forcing it to abandon the quiet, deliberate and effective work the commission has been doing with our communities.

As on the two previous occasions, the answer is obvious: in the interest of equal opportunity for all our citizens, for the continued maintenance of sensible compromise, and for the avoidance of Federal court dictation of forced busing, I veto House Bill 1492 and call upon the Legislature and all our citizens to cooperate with the Human Relations Commission to work out these difficult and complex problems in a spirit of understanding rather than under the dictation of the Federal courts, a course which inevitably leads to disorder and unrest.

MILTON J. SHAPP