

Veto No. 1992-3

HB 1318

July 9, 1992

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

I am returning herewith, without my approval, House Bill 1318, Printer's No.3417, entitled "An act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled 'An act relating to the public school system, including certain provisions applicable as well to private and parochial schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the laws relating thereto,' further providing for the cost of tuition and maintenance of certain exceptional children."

Upon the provisions of House Bill 1318, final audits will be prepared by independent auditors instead of by Office of the Budget comptrollers. While the department will set the audit standards, the Commonwealth will lose its ability to define the scope of the audits conducted and will have no control over the format and plan of the audits. This will severely handicap and reduce our oversight and control of this program. The time frame of 120 days for review of the independent audits does not allow sufficient time to conduct the type of review which these audits will require. Failure to notify schools in writing of the determination regarding the audit will result in acceptance by default which is an unacceptable practice. In addition, independent auditors will cost an estimated \$750,000 to \$1 million annually which will be charged directly against the appropriation, thereby reducing program funds. This estimate does not include additional costs for review and monitoring of the audits.

The backlog in audits of these approved private schools will be eliminated by the fall of this year. Therefore, a major impetus for passage of this bill will no longer exist. Alternative solutions were proposed which will not result in any additional costs to the State nor reduce program funds. Any of the alternative approaches could be enacted when the General Assembly reconvenes in September 1992.

Since House Bill 1318 will remove the Commonwealth from meaningful involvement in the approved private school audit process and unnecessarily increase costs to the State without any increase in services or benefits, I hereby disapprove this bill and return it to the General Assembly without my signature.

ROBERT P. CASEY