

VETO MESSAGE - No. 68

TO THE ASSEMBLY:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, the following bill:

Assembly Bill Number 4629-B, entitled:

"AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to requisite training instruction for police officers for crimes involving sexual assaults; and to amend the social services law, in relation to training for child protective services workers in certain instances"

NOT APPROVED

This bill requires the Municipal Police Training Council (MPTC) to promulgate rules and regulations that will require all new and veteran police officers in New York State to receive training concerning crimes involving sexual assault. Although the goal of this bill is extremely important, extensive training is currently provided and this bill contains drafting errors and is prohibitively costly, warranting disapproval.

There is no question that providing enhanced training to police officers and child protective services caseworkers is a worthwhile goal. However, the specific requirements of the bill appear to be largely unnecessary, because new police recruits already receive training on sexual crimes and related issues such as why these crimes are often not reported, the trauma that victims suffer and how to interview victims of sexual assaults and child victims. Similarly, new child protective services caseworkers are trained in how to investigate allegations of child and sexual abuse, the indicators of abuse and how to interview child victims. In addition, a smaller number of caseworkers who specialize in sexual abuse cases can receive more intensive follow-up training in these areas. Therefore, training is already being provided to police officers and caseworkers in most areas mandated by this bill.

The bill also contains some provisions that are inconsistent with other areas of law. For example, the bill envisions that the MPTC can promulgate regulations that will govern the in-service training of all current police officers in New York State. In fact, the MPTC does not have this authority, but can only recommend such regulations, which must be approved by the Governor.

Finally, the cost of this bill is prohibitive for the State and local governments. New York State is in a fiscal crisis and the State budget, as well as county and local budgets are being slashed. The Division of the Budget estimates that it will cost \$5 million to support the newly mandated training for veteran police officers and between \$9 and \$10 million if all child protective services caseworkers are required to receive more intensive training. Although the goal of this bill is laudable, imposing such an additional unfunded mandate upon localities and the State cannot be justified at this time.

The bill is disapproved.

(signed) DAVID A. PATERSON

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