I am filing Assembly Bill No. 3920 (Second Reprint) in the Division of Archives and Records Management without my approval.

Under the provisions of Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, this bill, which was passed within 10 days preceding the expiration of the second legislative year, does not become law because it was not signed prior to noon of the seventh day following such expiration. While in this circumstance there is no provision for the return of a bill to the Legislature for reconsideration, I believe it is appropriate to express my reasons for not approving this legislation.

This legislation would require hundreds of hospitals, nursing homes, and home health care agencies licensed in New Jersey, to annually administer influenza vaccinations to thousands of individuals employed in health care facilities. The program permits employees to decline vaccination only with proof of a current influenza vaccination from another source, or a signed written statement of declination. Health care facilities are further required to develop and administer educational programs promoting vaccination, and conduct evaluations designed to increase the rate of vaccination among employees. Finally, this legislation would require health care facilities to report to the Department of Health and Senior Services the number of employees complying with the vaccination mandate.

While I am deeply committed to reducing the spread of influenza and other viruses by continuing to build healthy communities and promoting preventive medicine, I am concerned with the proliferation of compelled vaccinations. Mandating by
The vaccination of thousands of medical employees at hundreds of health care facilities is a significant and sweeping change in health policy that deserves careful scrutiny before implementation.

Equally important, I am concerned with the unnecessary administrative burdens this legislation would place on the hundreds of hospitals, nursing homes, and home health care agencies that would be required to collect and report data to the State regarding their respective vaccination programs. Finally, I am skeptical that government should begin monitoring data concerning voluntary participation in these vaccination programs. The specter of such intrusive oversight of personal medical choices is inconsistent with basic notions of individual decision making, and should not be lightly adopted as State policy.

Accordingly, I have decided to file Assembly Bill No. 3920 (Second Reprint) without my approval.

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie
[seal] Governor

Attest:

/s/ Kevin M. O’Dowd
Deputy Chief Counsel to the Governor