To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 2291 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

This bill would eliminate the mandate that full-time students enrolled at a community college maintain health insurance coverage. While I applaud the sponsors’ intent to alleviate the financial burden placed on New Jersey’s college students, I believe it does not go far enough, I recommend expanding this bill to repeal the health insurance requirement for all full-time students enrolled at any institution of higher education. Under existing law, full-time students must maintain insurance coverage as a prerequisite of attending school. While health care insurance is a sensible precaution for many students, the decision to purchase insurance should be a choice, not a requirement. Eliminating the directive that students obtain and maintain health care coverage as a prerequisite to attending a college or university in our State will ease the financial impact of obtaining a higher education. I agree with the reasoning and intent of this legislation, and thus recommend that this bill be expanded to all institutions in the State, not merely community colleges.

Accordingly, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 2291 (First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

Page 2, Title, Lines 2-3: Delete “and supplementing”
Page 2, Section 1, Lines 19-31: Delete in their entirety
Page 2, Section 1, Line 32: Delete “c.”
Page 2, Section 1, Line 37: Delete “d.” and insert “b.”
Page 2, Section 1, Lines 40-41: Delete “subsections a., b., and c.” and insert “subsection a.”
Page 3, Section 1, Lines 12-23: Delete in their entirety
Page 3, Section 2, Lines 26-30: Delete in their entirety
Page 3, Section 3, Lines 32-36: Delete in their entirety
Page 3, Section 4, Line 38: Delete “4.” and insert “2.”

Respectfully,
/s/ Chris Christie
Governor

Attest:
/s/ Charles B. McKenna
Chief Counsel to the Governor