

## **H 364 YOUTH DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

March 7, 2000

### **HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 99**

I have this day VETOED and am returning HOUSE BILL 364, as amended, enacted by the Forty-Fourth Legislature, Second Session, 2000.

Reducing drug use and abuse among youth and young adults is an important goal of our state and national drug policy. Adequate funding to well designed, coordinated and effectively delivered drug prevention programs is a vital component of the policy and budget shift America must make as we transition from today's "drug war" strategies to tomorrow's harm reduction policies.

While well intentioned, House Bill 364's ambitious \$2 million appropriation "to establish youth drug prevention programs in local communities and schools," falls well short of its legislative goal for several reasons:

1. It appropriates funds to the wrong department. Under existing law, our health and education departments (not CYFD) administer drug education/prevention programs.
2. It appropriates funds from the wrong source. Taking \$2 million from the cash balances of the wrong department is fiscally imprudent and programmatically improper.
3. It appropriates funds for drug prevention programs without certification that the programs have been rigorously evaluated. Studies show we have yet to develop and deliver effective school-based drug prevention programs. This bill simply states the \$2 million must be spent on "programs that reflect the rural and urban nature of this state and that are sensitive to the cultural and ethnic diversity of the state's citizens." This is hardly a requirement that funding flow to programs that have a proven track record of actually reducing adolescent drug use and abuse.