

State of Illinois  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
Springfield, Illinois 62706

George H. Ryan  
GOVERNOR

July 18, 2001

To the Honorable Members of  
The Illinois Senate  
92nd General Assembly

Today, I am approving Senate Bill 62, a bill which I believe will strengthen communication between Illinois' workers and business owners.

Senate Bill 62 statutorily establishes the State of Illinois Department of Employment Security's role in promoting employers' responsibilities related to potential plant closings.

The federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act--commonly known as the WARN Act--requires an employer of 100 or more workers to give a minimum sixty-day "WARN notice" anytime that employer reduces his workforce by fifty workers or more. It seems only fair that workers have some advance notice that their jobs are being eliminated and my administration strongly supports the WARN Act.

While the vast majority of employers in Illinois comply with the WARN Act, from time to time an employer doesn't follow the rules, and unnecessary consternation and confusion results. Additionally, when WARN notices are not filed with the State of Illinois, our Rapid Response Unit, a unit within the Department of Employment Security, is hindered in its effort to provide immediate services to the affected workers--identifying training and retraining services that help increase the likelihood that workers will find new jobs sooner rather than later.

I believe those employers violating the WARN Act do so more out of lack of knowledge than anything else. Under the provisions of Senate Bill 62, the Department of Employment Security will send annual reminders to employers of 100 or more (almost 7,000 statewide) reminding them of the Act's requirements. I am confident this legislation will help eliminate whatever confusion exists, and assure our workers have sufficient information on which to make decisions affecting themselves and their families.

Senate Bill 62 is a reasoned approach to helping assure that when major employers close their doors, workers know it, and know their options. It is with pride that I affix my signature and approve Senate Bill 62.

Sincerely,  
George H. Ryan  
GOVERNOR