

State of Illinois
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Springfield, Illinois 62706

George H. Ryan
GOVERNOR

August 15, 2001

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

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby veto and return Senate Bill 1304, entitled "AN ACT concerning immunizations."

Senate Bill 1304 amends the Department of Public Health Act. It provides that a person is ineligible to serve on the Immunization Advisory Committee if the person or his or her spouse is an officer, employee, or agent of, or has any ownership or other financial interest in a pharmaceutical company that manufactures vaccines. Senate Bill 1304 prohibits members or their spouses from soliciting or accepting anything of value or any other economic benefit from a pharmaceutical company that manufactures or produces vaccines unless it is offered and available generally to licensed physicians or the public. Senate Bill 1304 also states that the prohibitions do not apply to an officer, employee, or his or her spouse of a government or non-profit entity that solicits vaccines for the governmental or non-profit entity.

I have concerns regarding the impact Senate Bill 1304 would have on the Immunization Advisory Committee. Senate Bill 1304 would severely limit the number of pediatric disease specialists and pediatric physicians in general, who would be eligible to serve on the Immunization Advisory Committee. Many physicians with expertise in the field of immunizations and infectious disease have contractual relationships with pharmaceutical companies with regards to speaking engagements. Also, many medical schools and academic centers employ infectious disease specialists that perform research funded by the pharmaceutical industry. The Committee provides the Director of the Department of Public Health with valuable knowledge, resources and recommendations with regards to childhood immunizations. To limit the eligible number of experts available to serve on the Immunization Advisory Committee would be a mistake.

Furthermore, the members of the Committee are already required to complete a Financial Interest Inventory statement disclosing their financial relationships with pharmaceutical companies. Committee members with a substantial financial interest are required to abstain on votes pertaining to entities with which the member has a financial relationship.

I have instructed the Director of the Department of Public Health to consider possible conflicts of interest as he or she reviews possible candidates for the Immunization Advisory Committee. The Department of Public Health's legal counsel also monitors and reviews voting records of the Immunization Advisory Committee to ensure compliance with the by-laws regarding disclosure of financial interests and voting. Therefore, I do not see a need for the provisions and restrictions imposed by Senate Bill 1304.

For these reasons, I hereby veto and return Senate Bill 1304.

Sincerely,
George H. Ryan
GOVERNOR