State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196
401-222-2080

Donald L. Carcieri
Governor

November 9, 2009

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 14, Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island and Section 43-1-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I transmit, with my disapproval, 2009 H 5913, Substitute A, "Relating to Courts and Civil Procedure –Procedure Generally – Fees."

This act would increase the fees collected in the district and family courts. A portion of the increased fees would then be directed to Rhode Island Legal Services, a nonprofit organization.

Although increasing the fees in order to sufficiently cover costs for small claims and family matters may be appropriate, I have concern about directing some of the increased revenue to a nonprofit organization without a bid process and without specific grant requirements on how these funds will be used. Regardless of whether the intent of the Rhode Island Legal Services is entirely altruistic, this legislation provides no control or oversight on how these funds should be used.

Directly allocating taxpayer funds to a nonprofit organization is akin to awarding a no bid contract and sets a bad precedent. Rhode Island Legal Services already received a community service grant of approximately $135,000. Instead, the General Assembly should provide for a process, under the purview of the Judicial or Executive Branch, to competitively allocate these funds, with appropriate oversight and spending requirements in place.

For these reasons, I disapprove of this legislation and respectfully urge your support of this veto.

Sincerely,

Donald L. Carcieri
Governor