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 6059, Substitute A, "An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government-Restricting Radio Frequency Identification Devices Act."

This Act would prohibit the State and any political subdivision from using Radio Frequency Identification Devices ("RFID") for the purpose of tracking the movement of or identity of any student on school grounds, at school functions, or while being transported to or from school grounds or school functions with the exception of a student with special needs that has such tracking included in their Individual Education Plan and with parental permission. RFID is a data capture technology that allows for identification using microchips.

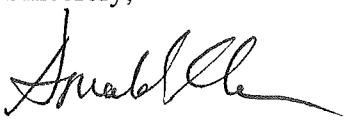
While such technology should be used with caution when applied to individuals, H 6059, Substitute A, recognizes the potential value of RFID for students with special needs. Why would the General Assembly therefore place restrictions on the use of this technology as an option for all students? Local community and school officials should be able to decide if they need this tracking device. All parents also should have the choice to allow such devices to be used.

Education institutions today face a broad range of facts and circumstances at all levels regarding the security and safety of their students. In certain circumstances, it may be helpful for schools to have the ability to quickly identify where each of their students is located, not only those students with special needs. Such circumstances may include weather related natural disasters, terrorist or criminal events or even a need for use during field trips and outside school activities.

Officials should have the option to use these devices if deemed necessary to insure each of their students is being transported to and from school and school functions safely and that the school setting and school activities represent a safe environment for learning.

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

Sincerely,



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