

July 31, 2009

To the Honorable Members of the
Illinois House of Representative
96th General Assembly

Today I return House Bill 2129 to the House of Representatives with a reduction totaling \$106,685,300.

House Bill 2129 appropriates funds to the Illinois State Board of Education for fiscal year 2010. It is deeply painful to me to be forced to make these cuts in programs which I consider critical to the future of the State of Illinois. When we invest in the education of our young people, we ensure decades of dividends, both economic and social. When we are forced to limit those early investments in our children's academic potential, the results are felt for years to come.

Consistent with my principles, I am ensuring that Illinois will continue to secure the maximum funding available to us through the ARRA State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. I also will ensure that special education and transportation services are fully funded, as requested by the State Board of Education. Finally, despite unprecedented budget difficulties, I will provide a \$160 per student increase in the Foundation Level, providing \$6,119 per student through the General State Aid formula. I wish that I could provide a greater increase, but I cannot in good conscience support an increase in funding for General State Aid above the level provided last year.

This increase is consistent with my Administration's ongoing commitment to provide quality education for all of the children of our State. Increasing the foundation level is a step towards providing the education that our children deserve. I am heartened that, by acting on this bill today, we can take that important step.

Earlier today, I announced the allocation of \$3.4 billion in funds appropriated by the General Assembly. My allocation of those funds includes restoration of \$150 million for the Illinois State Board of Education, including \$85 million for early childhood education and \$11 million for bilingual programs. By allocating these funds, I am providing only 90% of last year's

funding, but I believe I am ensuring that the State of Illinois continues to shoulder its obligations to our most vulnerable children, in hopes of providing them with brighter futures.

Unfortunately, even with our best efforts, the State of Illinois simply does not have adequate funds to meet all of its financial responsibilities in this fiscal year. Accordingly, our State's inadequate financial resources compel the necessary reductions I am making today. I would add only that this action represents our very best effort to balance our responsibilities to the next generation against the grim realities of our State's current fiscal condition.

Therefore, pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(d) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby reduce and return an appropriation item included in House Bill 2129, entitled "AN ACT making appropriations" with a reduction totaling \$106,685,300.

Reductions

I hereby reduce the appropriation item listed below and approve the amount set forth in the "Reduced Amount" column below:

Article	Section	Page	Line(s)	Amount Enacted	Reduced Amount
1	15	2	9	295,743,800	189,058,500

In addition to this specific reduction, I hereby approve all other appropriation items in House Bill 2129.

Sincerely,

Pat Quinn
GOVERNOR