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To the Honorable Speaker and Members,
The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning, without my approval as to Section 4, Substitute House Bill No. 1636 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to child care workers."

This bill establishes a childcare career and wage ladder in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and requires it to be implemented only if funds are appropriated for this purpose. Funds were not appropriated. Childcare career and wage ladders effectively increase the salary and benefits of childcare workers. The DSHS had a childcare career and wage ladder pilot project in place a few years ago but eliminated it when the WorkFirst Program faced a budget shortfall.

Section 4 would require the DSHS to establish program standards, study the impact of the childcare career and wage ladder on the quality of childcare and the childcare workforce, and report its findings to the Legislature by December 1, 2006. Section 4 is not subject to the "within funds specifically appropriated for this purpose" clause in the bill. Section 4 should be vetoed; it makes no sense for the DSHS to take the time to create a report for a program that does not exist.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Section 4 of Substitute House Bill No. 1636.

With the exception of Section 4, Substitute House Bill No. 1636 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/
Christine O. Gregoire
Governor