

This bill provides for the establishment of public school programs for certain disadvantaged children between the ages of three and eighteen. The State Board of Education is given overall responsibility for the development and review of programs to be financed largely with State funds and implemented by the local school systems.

I have been advised that the cost of additional required staffing for the State Department of Education would approximate \$100,000 a year, and that, based upon the estimated number of children who would be included in the programs, an additional \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000 in State funds would be needed for fiscal year 1973 alone to implement the programs once established.

There is, of course, no provision for such funds in the 1973 budget. Equally important, however, is the fact that the cost, as estimated, would be a recurring one, and I do not believe sufficient thought has been given to where the revenues required to fund such an on-going program will be found. Whenever the State undertakes to assume a program entailing such considerable expense, it must do so in the light of other existing calls upon the State's fiscal resources, and more adequate consideration must be given to the source of the funding.

It is true that the bill looks toward partial funding from Title I of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and other Federal statutes; however Federal funds are not always maintained at the level anticipated by the State. Should such funds be reduced or not maintained at a level consistent with the needs of the program, the State will be required to make up the deficit. The total cost to the State in the coming years, therefore, is not truly susceptible to accurate estimation, and may well exceed the present estimates of \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000.

The generally worthwhile purpose of the bill can, I believe, be accomplished in large part under existing law. The State Board of Education already has ample power and authority to develop programs for disadvantaged children and to work with local systems in their implementation. The local systems can presently apply for federal funds to finance such programs, or assist in their financing.

For these reasons, I have decided to veto Senate Bill 603.

Sincerely,

/s/ MARVIN MANDEL,
Governor.

Senate Bill No. 685—State Payments on Local School Debt

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Section 130 (b)(2) of Article 77 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1969 Replacement Volume and 1971 Supplement), title "Public Education," subtitle "Chapter 9. Financial FINANCE AND Reports," to provide that the State shall share in an amount equal to 80% of PAY the principal and interest payments due during the current fiscal year on local debt incurred after June 30, 1967 for school construction for which contracts had been let prior to July 1, 1967.