

WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER, Governor

May 25, 1990

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
President of the Senate
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed Senate Bill 60.

This bill would extend the jurisdiction of equity court over children whose adoptions have been delayed after the termination of parental rights. Under current law, the court's jurisdiction is terminated when the child reaches age 18. Senate Bill 60 would extend the court's jurisdiction until the child reached age 21 unless terminated sooner.

Senate Bill 60 is supported by Legal Aid and the Maryland Judicial Conference. As pointed out by the proponents of this bill, often these children are victims of child abuse and have behavioral problems that make them difficult to place in an adoptive home. Extending the equity court's jurisdiction would allow the court to monitor these children's cases, oversee their progress in foster care, and ensure the appropriateness of services provided to them until age 21.

While originally supporting Senate Bill 60, the Department of Human Resources has now requested a veto because of the enactment of House Bill 911. The Department believes that "House Bill 911 would serve essentially the same population". House Bill 911 establishes a Social Services Pilot Program to deliver services to between 100 and 200 children between the ages of 16 and 21. The pilot program would be targeted to children "who are at risk for an unsuccessful transition to adulthood" and would include services such as individual counseling, crisis intervention, needs assessment, resource referral, and volunteer mentors.

The Department argues that enactment of both Senate Bill 60 and House Bill 911 would be duplicative. House Bill 911 gives the Department the flexibility to target the group of young adults and services which would be covered under Senate Bill 60. The Department believes that this flexibility is necessary to best serve the needs of this population.

For the above reasons, I have decided to veto Senate Bill 60.

Sincerely,
William Donald Schaefer
Governor

Senate Bill No. 60

AN ACT concerning

Equity Court Jurisdiction – Delays in Adoption