

AN ACT concerning

Health - Medical Protection for Volunteers

FOR the purpose of [[requiring]] extending certain medical protection programs [[to]] for certain persons under certain unconditions who perform specified duties for the State or any State or private nonprofit charitable agencies; requiring the State or certain State or private nonprofit charitable agencies to keep certain records and pay certain premiums or assessments; to allow volunteers in local government and private nonprofit charitable agencies to be provided medical aid protection under an approved insurance plan; defining certain terms; and clarifying language.

May 17, 1976.

Honorable John Hanson Briscoe
Speaker of the House of Delegates
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21404

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed House Bill 1186.

This bill authorizes the State, as well as private nonprofit agencies, to extend health insurance benefits to volunteers. My objection to the bill is that, although the decision to provide these benefits is optional, if the coverage is offered to any, it must be offered to all. Yet, the bill is poorly drafted in terms of defining what and who a volunteer is.

The term "volunteer" is defined in new section 471A(a) of Article 48A as a person who performs "any assigned or authorized duties for the State or any State or private nonprofit charitable agency, except emergency service workers as described in section 474(g) of this article." Overlooking, for the moment, the fact that there is no section 474(g) of Article 48A, and that the term "emergency service workers" is not defined or described anywhere else in the relevant subtitle to Article 48A, the definition would appear to include volunteers working with any agency of State government. However, new section 471A(d) provides that "volunteers shall perform authorized or accepted work at the time an accident occurs or a disease is contracted," which would appear to limit the definitional scope to those persons working in some health related field.