

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed House Bill 948.

This bill is an emergency measure which establishes a procedure for the acquisition and control of all data processing equipment and services in the State. It also creates a Data Processing Policy Board and defines its powers and duties. The Department of Budget and Fiscal Planning is the agency responsible for the implementation of this law.

House Bill 948 has a long and controversial history. Its predecessor, House Bill 459 of 1977, was vetoed by Governor Marvin Mandel on May 26, 1977. That bill attempted to centralize all aspects of the State's automatic data processing system by vesting general responsibility for acquiring all data processing equipment and services for all State agencies in the Department of General Services. It further proposed to vest in the Comptroller's Office, through a Central Data Processing Division, all operational control over the data processing system.

House Bill 459 was vetoed for several reasons, the most important of which was the serious concern that the required centralization and transfer of responsibility could not be achieved effectively within the time frame mandated by the bill. Therefore, in order to consider and address this issue, and the special needs and circumstances of the agencies involved, and in order to establish reasonable time limits for the reorganization, the veto message requested the Secretary of Budget and Fiscal Planning and the Comptroller to commence a three-phase process to implement such a reorganization of all data processing resources. This process, in which all State agencies were directed to cooperate, was structured as follows:

- Phase I: Centralizing the Annapolis and Baltimore Data Centers, as well as the Public Safety and University Hospital Operations;
- Phase II: Bringing the Department of Transportation into the System;
- Phase III: Including Higher Education in the System.

The implementation of Phase I was begun immediately and it culminated in the submission to the General Assembly, in the Budget Bill for fiscal year 1979, of this part of the reorganization program, absent the University Hospital Operations which are to be dealt with in the third phase. Just prior to the submission of the Budget, the Attorney General had occasion to comment upon and approve the