

This bill would prohibit the closing of a public school in Anne Arundel County without the approval of the County Executive and a majority of the County Council.

Current law provides that local school boards determine facility needs and recommend school closings to the State Superintendent of Schools for approval. This procedure reflects the sound policy that such decisions involve considerations which are primarily educational in nature (e.g., suitability for educational programs, efficiency of operation, utilization, and existence of suitable alternative educational facilities) and which are properly the primary responsibility of local school boards.

Although this is a local bill, there is considerable and, in my opinion, valid concern that it would create a precedent for future legislation for all counties, and that political pressures in this time of declining enrollment would make it virtually impossible to responsibly close unneeded school facilities.

Senate Bill 625 has been presented to me because of the alleged lack of responsiveness of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education to the citizens of some northern county communities. If such unresponsiveness exists and if it persists in spite of the loud and clear message which the passage of this measure has sent, it may adequately be dealt with through the appointments process or through the enactment of legislation providing for an elected board. In the meantime, it is my judgment (and apparently that of a majority of the members of the Anne Arundel County Council) that the drastic action proposed by this measure is unnecessary and undesirable.

For these reasons I have decided to veto Senate Bill 625.

Sincerely,
Harry Hughes
Governor

Senate Bill No. 632

AN ACT concerning

Labor and Industry - Filing Fees and Court Costs

FOR the purpose of waiving the payment of any filing fees or court costs by the Commissioner of Labor and Industry in connection with the performance of his duties.