

This bill is an attempt to expand the rights of minors 16 years of age or older to consent to treatment for an emotional or mental disorder. Currently, State law permits a person who has attained the age of 16, to consent to diagnosis and consultation by a physician or clinic.

The effect of Senate Bill 436 would expand a minor's present rights from diagnosis and consultation by a physician to include treatment by a physician. At the same time, the bill would deny a minor's current right to both diagnosis and consultation by a clinic. Thus, instead of a minor having a choice of potential services, he is restricted to those performed by a physician.

Persons in this age group are seldom aware of the steps to be taken in order to obtain information and referrals to a private physician. Service providers such as hospital outpatient departments and community mental health clinics, that can be identified and located by troubled youths, would be closed to them. Limitations of this sort may well provide further financial barriers to treatment for such persons.

I believe it to be unwise to deny young people the access they need to care for their emotional problems. While the bill initially intended to expand opportunities for treatment, the bill as finally passed diminishes the access that the current law provides. Accordingly, I have decided to veto Senate Bill 436.

Sincerely,
Harry Hughes
Governor

Senate Bill No. 456

AN ACT concerning

Creation of a State Debt - Shore Erosion Control

FOR the purpose of authorizing the creation of a State Debt in the amount of \$1,000,000, the proceeds to be used to provide State funds for design and construction of shore erosion control projects; and providing generally for the issue and sale of bonds evidencing the loan.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That: