

When I was elected Governor of this State, I appointed a Commission on Welfare Grants. That Commission furnished a report dated November 1, 1979, in which it established a standard of need and recommended increased grants for welfare recipients. For Fiscal Year 1980, I recommended increased grants of 10% and the General Assembly approved my request. In Fiscal Year 1981, I recommended increased welfare grants of 11% and the General Assembly approved that request. In each of those two fiscal years funds were available to permit the increases that were authorized. For Fiscal Year 1982, I again made increased grants a top priority of my Administration. But as we all learned sufficient revenue did not materialize to effect any change. Increasing welfare grants remains a commitment of mine but without sufficient revenues or new revenue sources, such increases cannot be made.

The fiscal picture of the State has not changed materially and the revenue projections continue to lag mirroring the nation's economy. Furthermore, the new administration in Washington has vowed to slash federally aided programs, such as the ones addressed by this bill, by as much as 25%.

With the State's economy continuing to produce slack revenues and with the sure knowledge that the federal government will be withdrawing massive financial support from this and other states, plus the fact that no new revenue raising measure has been passed, I cannot in good conscience sign Senate Bill 1061 today which would require the following State expenditures over the next four fiscal years: 1983 - \$16,388,700; 1984 - \$38,325,800; 1985 - \$63,630,100 and 1986 - \$96,704,700.

Some people have argued that this bill does not require, as a matter of constitutional law, that these expenditures be made. Others have argued that I should sign the bill with the full knowledge that I won't include any further increases in my budget submissions. To adopt either or both of these arguments might satisfy constitutional experts and budget technicians. But surely, merely signing the bill, under those conditions, will not satisfy the human needs of those unfortunate citizens who must look to the State government for help. And it will not satisfy me.

Since I have been Governor, I believe I have demonstrated my concern for our citizens who are in need. I appointed a Commission on Welfare Grants which reported to me just 18 months ago. I recommended increases of 21% when funds were available. I will continue my efforts to raise grant levels to the standard of need. But I will not sign a bill which would falsely raise the hopes of countless numbers of Maryland citizens when I know that the necessary revenues to sustain those hopes are not available.