

procurement law. Additionally, there have been no problems with the current procurement system that would warrant burdening the process by requiring General Assembly approval before the State can enter into an international trade agreement.

It has been said that Maryland represents America in miniature. Without question, any business, product or service an individual anywhere in the world may need is made in Maryland. Because our State is so uniquely situated in the global economy, it is imperative that we maintain an aggressive and responsive international marketing strategy. It is counterproductive to require the world of business to stand still while the Maryland General Assembly debates legislation to approve a specific international trade agreement. Traditionally, a legislative body may become involved in international trade agreements when a specific issue warrants such action. In recent history, legislative bodies enacted trade restrictions against South Africa as a specific response to the existing political climate. In such instances, the legislative response is specific and very narrowly focused.

This State, and in particular this Administration, is serious about the place that Maryland has in the global economy. Hindering my (or future Chief Executive Officers') ability to respond quickly to the demands of that global economy will have a chilling effect on local businesses and on the State in general, regardless of who requests the trade agreement.

We live in a global community and strive to be good neighbors with all cultures of the world. The trade agreements affected by this legislation could promote global competition and opportunities. Participation in these agreements can benefit Maryland by promoting a more level playing field in government procurement. To the extent that Senate Bill 401 is an attempt to limit competition and possibly reduce foreign access to the Maryland market undermines the State's efforts to increase trade and investment opportunities with foreign countries. Additionally, abandoning the nondiscrimination requirements of GPA could result in increased State procurement costs.

Senate Bill 401 is also representative of a growing number of bills that this legislature has seen fit to pass over the last three years that seek to curtail the powers of the executive branch of government. As the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Maryland, I believe that the citizens of Maryland expect me to make responsible and prudent decisions on their behalf.

For the above stated reasons, I have vetoed Senate Bill 401.

Very truly yours,
Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

Senate Bill No. 401

AN ACT concerning

**International Trade Agreement - Procurement Rules - General Assembly
Approval**