

My Administration believes the appropriate amount of information sharing necessary to develop programs and a policy aimed at greater protection for our youth currently exists. In its wisdom, the General Assembly, in keeping with the provisions contained in the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, passed Citizen Review Panels and Child Fatality Review Teams in 1999, thereby creating a system of citizen review that addresses the very issue that House Bill 900 proposes to resolve. Each of the citizen review entities, Citizen Review Board for Children, State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, and the State Child Fatality Review Team are required to review and make recommendations for improving the State's child protection activities. This statute requires a representative of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to participate as a member on the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to be a member of the State Child Fatality Review Team, and the local health officer be a member of the local child fatality review team. As members of the citizen review entities, local health departments have access to local departments of social services child protective services investigations – the department can see the actual records, but not retain them. This access, however, stops short of an absolute requirement to provide all such records to a local health department on demand, without regard to whether or not the local health department is providing a service to a family.

My Administration has offered its cooperation to the Baltimore City Health Department in developing new initiatives to prevent children from becoming victims of crime. Further, we will continue to strive for a suitable balance between the protection of our children, privacy rights of our families and the needs of our localities. The issues presented in House Bill 900 would be more appropriately addressed through a memorandum of understanding among the affected entities, rather than through legislation.

For the above stated reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 900.

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

### House Bill No. 900

AN ACT concerning

#### **Children – Records – Access by ~~Local Health Departments~~ the Baltimore City Health Department**

FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Juvenile Services to disclose to a ~~local health department~~ the Baltimore City Health Department certain records concerning certain children under certain circumstances; requiring the Baltimore City Health Department to submit certain reports under certain circumstances; requiring that certain records and reports concerning child abuse and neglect be disclosed to a ~~local health department~~ the Baltimore City Health Department under certain circumstances; authorizing access to certain court records and police records by a ~~local health department~~ the Baltimore City Health Department under certain circumstances; requiring the Department of