

# Legislative History for Connecticut Act

**PA 17-1**  
**January SS**  
**Vetoed**

HB 7601

Bill was passed, vetoed and repassed in January 2018.

House 2018	11-29, 49-58	29
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Senate 2018	17-33, 41-46	23
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Resolution No. 404.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you. Would you care to remark further?  
Would you care to remark further? If not, let me  
try your minds. All those in favor of the  
Resolution please signify by saying aye.

MEMBERS:

Aye.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

All those opposed, nay. The ayes have it and  
the Resolution is adopted. [Gavel]. Representative  
Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Madam Speaker, I move that we immediate  
transmit this Resolution to the Senate.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Is there objection? Is there objection? I'm  
seeing none, so ordered. [Gavel]. Will the Clerk  
please call Emergency Certified House Bill No. 7601?

CLERK:

Emergency Certification Bill No. 7601, AN ACT  
CONCERNING ADJUSTMENTS TO THE STATE BUDGET REGARDING

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THE MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM AND ELIGIBILITY

THEREFORE, introduced by Representative Aresimowicz,  
Representative Ritter, Representative Klarides,  
Representative Candelora, Senator Looney, Senator  
Duff, Senator Fasano, and Senator Witkos.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

The Chamber will stand at ease for one moment.  
While we are waiting, are there any announcements or  
introductions? Representative Godfrey.

REP. GODFREY (110TH):

For purposes for an introduction.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

You may proceed, sir.

REP. GODFREY (110TH):

Thank you, ma'am. Ladies and gentlemen, we  
have a visitor from the great state of Vermont from  
the state Senate, state Senator Christopher Pearson,  
who represents Chittenden up there in snow country,  
although we've had that share here, so please give a  
warm House welcome to state Senator Christopher  
Pearson from Vermont. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[Applause].

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SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you, Representative Godfrey. Thank you for visiting our Chamber. We're glad to have you here. Happy new year to you. Are there any announcements or introductions? Representative Abercrombie.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of an announcement.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

You may proceed, madam.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Madam Speaker, I would like my colleagues in the Chamber to send their best regards to our esteemed Chair of Appropriations, Toni Walker. She is not here today because she is recovering from surgery, but I know she's watching, so I would like us all to just give her a little wave and hope she feels better soon.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you, madam. Toni, if you're watching, we wish you a speedy recovery. [Gavel]. Chamber will

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come back to order. Before we proceed, are there any announcements or introductions? Representative Urban. Representative Urban, do you have an announcement or an introduction? Representative Urban. Thank you. [Laughing]. Will the Clerk please call Emergency Certified House Bill No. 7601?

CLERK:

Emergency Certification Bill No. 7601, AN ACT CONCERNING ADJUSTMENTS TO THE STATE BUDGET REGARDING THE MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM AND ELIGIBILITY THEREFORE, introduced by Representative Aresimowicz, Representative Ritter, Representative Klarides, Representative Candelora, Senator Looney, Senator Duff, Senator Fasano, Senator Witkos.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Abercrombie.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I move passage of Emergency Certified Bill No. 7601, please.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

The question is on passage of the Bill. Will

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you remark? Representative Abercrombie, you have the floor.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we are here today to vote on putting the money back in the budget for a program that is near and dear to all of our hearts.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Excuse me. [Gavel]. We're trying to transact some business here. If you have conversations, can you please take them out in the hall. It's difficult to hear the speaker. Representative Abercrombie, you may proceed.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Medicare Savings Program is a program that is near and dear to all of our hearts. This is a program that provides insurance for people that have Medicare. It's a supplemental insurance policy. Individuals are able to get their prescriptions paid for, their office visits, blood work. Without this program, a lot of our seniors and people with

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disabilities will not be able to get those services, so I thank my colleagues for being here today, for voting on this. I think it's really important. I think that our constituents are gonna be very hopeful in the future when it comes to services for them, and I move adoption.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you, madam. Will you remark further? Will you remark further on the Bill? Representative Case.

REP. CASE (63RD):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a few small points while we're here today. We're here today to fix some small bumps in the road or one small bump in the budget, the MSP, the Medical Savings Program. Being the Ranking Member on Human Services, this did come up in front of us. We had very limited people come before us to talk about it. This is very near and dear, as the good chairwoman said, to many people. This was in the governor's original budget. This was in the Appropriations budget that didn't get a vote on April 24, so we didn't have a chance

to talk about it. The public hearing, as I said, had very limited testimony. When we had meetings in the past few months with AARP, it didn't really hit their radar, and here we are today to fix a program that affects over 100,000 people. It is a necessary program, the way the cut was rolled out through DSS with a letter sent to all people who are affected by this and given 30 days notice. When we don't pass a budget at the due time in June but we do at the end of October, these are some of the implications that come out of a budget that isn't perfect. The MSP program, as the good chairwoman stated, affects some of the most near and dear people that really need this money to help get them through. Unfortunately, you know the implications that we heard once this came into effect and the number of calls that all of our legislators have gotten have prompted us to be here today to put a fix on this program and in speaking with the good chairwoman earlier, I have her word that we will keep working forward on this in Human Services to make sure that this program has a way and a path to work going forward, but with



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that, just so people know, in the past few months, the good chairwoman and myself and a few others have been meeting with Chores, AARP, Connecticut Legal Services to research other ways that we can fund this and that we can make sure that those people who need just a little bit of help and to us it might be a little bit of help but to those who have it it's a lot of help, so today I urge my colleagues to vote for this, to put it forward. I urge my colleagues to stay and to work with us to further this program so with that, Madam Speaker, I thank you.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further?

Representative Staneski.

REP. STANESKI (119TH):

Sorry, accident.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you. Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49TH):

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I just want to briefly thank leadership, thank the chairwoman of the Human Services Committee and the Ranking Member

for their work in making sure that we are able to restore the cuts that were made to the Medicare Savings Program. You know, the Medicare Savings Program has been in effect since 1988 under the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act, which was put into effect then. At that point in time, the Part B premium was around \$34 dollars a month. Then, in 1997, the Balanced Budget Amendment of that year created a different system for the financing of the Medicare Part B program so what happened then is there was a change in the Medicare Part B program where the homecare services were put into the Part B program for unlimited coverage, which increased the cost of the Medicare Part B premiums. Those Medicare Part B premiums went up to \$134 dollars a month, so when you take a look at the brief history here of why we need to have the Medicare Savings Program and why under the federal rules the savings program has allowed states to expand coverage, not only for the qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program but also for some other higher levels of income, we can see that when you have a couple that has saved

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\$134 dollars a month that comes out to more than \$3000 dollars a year, which would really put us in a situation where they're losing almost \$3000 dollars a year when we cut back on this program to 134 percent of poverty from 234 percent of poverty, so we really need to be very thankful that we're able to keep people in their homes, that we are in a situation now where we have a program that supports money follows the person, which keeps people out of skilled nursing facilities, keeps people in their homes with home care. This is something that we need to continuously need to take a look at, yes, but we really must continue to fund the Medicare Savings Program if we want to continue to save money from people going into the skilled nursing facility at 100 percent of poverty under the Medicare program, because these programs keep people in their homes, so thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you. Will you remark further?

Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):

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Good morning, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Good morning, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):

Happy new year to you.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Happy new year to you, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):

Thank you. Madam Speaker, I can understand why some of my colleagues would be voting for this today. I just had a few questions for the proponent, which may clear up some of my confusion.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Abercrombie, you can prepare yourself. You may proceed, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):

Good morning, Representative. I noticed that is part of what's before us here today we are repealing section 698 of 1502, which was previously passed. Am I correct in that? Through you, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Abercrombie.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and my understanding looking at that language it appears to be at the end of this fiscal year \$17.8 million dollars would be used in fiscal year 2019. Through you, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Abercrombie.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Can the good Representative repeat -- used for? I'm not exactly sure. Used for what? If you could break that down?

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Fishbein, could you please repeat your question.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):

Sure. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Reading from

the language of section 698 of what was SB1502, it says that the controller shall credit \$17.8 million dollars of the unappropriated surplus to the resources of the general fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, so I read that to mean that a surplus from this year is being appropriated for use in the general fund in 2019. Through you, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Abercrombie.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes. It's a transfer from the funds from 2019 back in 2018, but it's a one-time transfer. If that's your question? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, so then I note what we're voting on here today the bottom line for the second column fiscal year 2019 shows no change, so am I to understand that we are ending up with a hole

if we are to vote on this today of \$17.8 million dollars in fiscal year 2019? Through you, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Abercrombie.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes. That is correct.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'm supportive of the program. I don't think it should have been cut in the first place. I understand voting to restore it here today but I'm just not in favor of creating a hole in 2019, so thank you, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further?

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43RD):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and Madam Speaker, I

am incredibly supportive of our seniors, our disabled, and the Medicare Savings Program and I think that within my district I met with many of them and we were certainly concerned about what we had done in the budget, but Madam Speaker, I have to tell you today that in my other life as an economist I'm wondering why we're here today. It's my understanding that this program is safe through July because the governor has made it safe through July and we are creating, as my colleague across the isle has just indicated, a \$17.8 million-dollar hole. We are coming back in in February. We have a huge deficit that we're looking at then and the right way to budget is to budget all at once, looking at all these issues together. Piecemeal budgeting can only create problems for all of us. I listened to the Ranking Member and he said that they were negotiating right now with interested parties as to how we keep funding this because there is no guarantee that we will be able to continue along this trajectory and that's why I would recommend that we don't do this today, that we shouldn't be



here today, that we should be looking at this when we are looking at the deficit that we all know we are facing as we come back into session, and from that, I look at it from the perspective of fiscal responsibility and fiscal accountability, not from the perspective that we need this program. We need this program. It's a sort of black mark on us that we didn't see what was coming on this, and I think everybody in this Chamber realizes that we want to support our elderly and our disabled and we know how draconian this cut is. What I'm saying is it's taken care of through July. The governor has said that. We have the time to do this thoughtfully, to make sure that we do it correctly this time, not the way that we did it the last time, so I reserve my right to vote against this today, and Madam Speaker, I would also say I've taken some heat for saying that we shouldn't be funding the Amistad when we're looking at the budget deficits that we're looking at and for people here who don't understand where I'm coming from, the Amistad is a symbol of the tough budget decisions that we're gonna have to be making.

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We have spent \$9 million dollars on the Amistad, a wonderful, wonderful symbol that movies have been made about, that really celebrate Connecticut's role in the freedom of the slaves, something that we should all treasure, but there comes a point in time where we have to say where are we going to spend our money most effectively and that's what I'm talking about this morning. We have some tough decisions coming and I really believe that it makes sense for us to do it in a holistic manner, not in a piecemeal manner. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you, Madam. Will you remark further? Representative Pavalock-D'Amato. Thank you. Will you remark further? If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members please take your seats and the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

Members to the Chamber. The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Members to the Chamber.

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SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? Will the members please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast? If all members have voted, the machine will be locked, and the Clerk will take a tally. Will the Clerk please announce the tally?

CLERK:

Emergency Certification No. 7601

Total Number Voting	133
Necessary for Passage	67
Those Voting Yea	130
Those Voting Nay	3
Absent Not Voting	16

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

The bill passes. [Gavel]. Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Madam Speaker, I move that we immediately transmit LCO No. 10582 to the Senate.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Is there objection? Is there objection? I'm

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seeing none, so ordered. [Gavel]. Are there  
announcements? Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78TH):

Good morning. Thank you, Madam Speaker.  
Purpose of Journal notation. Representative LeGeyt  
is away in illness. Representative Polletta,  
Dauphinais, Sredzinski, and Wood are also away  
because of family business. I just wanted to put  
that in for this Journal. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you, sir. Any further announcements?  
Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that we  
adjourn, sine die. Prior to that -- back up. We're  
gonna have a quick Democratic caucus in the caucus  
room. Now that I've made that announcement, I would  
move that we adjourn, sine die. Thank you, Madam  
Speaker.

SPEAKER GENTILE (104TH):

Thank you. [Gavel]. Without objection, the  
House will adjourn, sine die.

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Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move immediate transmittal of all Resolutions that require further action in the Senate to the Senate.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Is there objection to transmittal? Is there objection to transmittal? Seeing none, so ordered.

(Gavel)

Will the Clerk please call Emergency Certified House Bill 7601?

CLERK:

Emergency Certification, House Bill No. 7601.

AN ACT CONCERNING ADJUSTMENTS TO THE STATE BUDGET REGARDING THE MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM AND ELIGIBILITY THEREFORE. Introduced by Representative Aresimowicz, Representative Ritter, Representative Klarides, Representative Candelora, Senator Looney, Senator Duff, Senator Fasano, and Senator Witkos.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Ladies and gentlemen of the Chamber, before calling on Representative

Abercrombie, I would like to point out to the Chamber. (Gavel)

Before we call on Representative Abercrombie to explain the bill, I'd like to point out to the Chamber that in order to take up a bill vetoed by the Governor, we need to follow a two-step process. The first step is a Motion for Reconsideration, assuming the motion is adopted, we then move on to the second motion. That motion would be a motion to repass the vetoed bill. The first motion, the Motion for Reconsideration is decided by a simple majority vote. The second motion is a motion to repass the legislation and that motion requires a two-thirds vote or at least 101 members.

I'm requesting that members avoid a prolonged discussion on the first procedural motion and reserve their comments or remarks for a second motion to repass the legislation.

With that being said, Representative Abercrombie, you have the floor, Madam.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move  
for reconsideration.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The question before the Chamber is on the  
reconsideration of House Bill 7601. For the benefit  
of the Chamber, I will note that Representative  
Abercrombie was on the prevailing side of this issue  
when the Chamber passed this measure and is  
therefore an appropriate member to make the motion  
for reconsideration.

Representative Abercrombie, will you remark?

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

I'll reserve my remarks when we pass the  
resolution, sir.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, Madam. Will you remark on  
the Motion to Reconsider? Will you remark further  
on the Motion to Reconsider? If not, it shall be a  
voice vote.

So, let me try your minds. All those in favor  
of the Motion for Reconsideration, please signify by

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saying, aye. Those opposed, nay. The ayes have it.  
the bill will be reconsidered. (Gavel)

Representative Abercrombie.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move  
for reconsideration of House Bill 7601.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, Madam. It's the re-  
passage of the bill. The question before the  
Chamber is on re-passage of that bill.

Representative Abercrombie, you have the floor,  
Madam.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're  
here today because with the wisdom of this body, we  
passed in Special Session to fully fund the Medicare  
Savings Program. Since then, the Governor has  
decided to veto that measure. We're here today to  
override that veto. This body believes in the  
Medicare Savings Program. This is a program that is  
very beneficial not only to our seniors, but to many  
individuals with disabilities. This is a



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supplemental program that helps people that have Medicare. With that I move adoption.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The question before the Chamber is on re-passage of the bill. Will you remark?

Representative Case of the 63rd District, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CASE (63RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate we're here today just to do another overturn.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

(Gavel) Ladies and gentlemen, I know the legislative session is just a couple of weeks away. A lot of us have interns and staff trying to catch up on the duties for that and individual legislators we haven't seen each other for at least a couple of weeks, so I know a lot of conversations are taking place. I will ask that if you're having those conversations, please bring them out to the hall. Today we are taking up a bill that provides healthcare to some of our most vulnerable residents.

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And I would ask that the State -- that this Chamber give that its proper attention. We can hear from the speakers about this bill.

I apologize for the interruption, Representative Case, but please now proceed.

REP. CASE (63RD):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, just for a point of comment. It's unfortunate that we're here today, once again, to override the Governor's veto. But I'm proud to be here and to ensure our most vulnerable, as the Speaker said, that this program will go on through the end of June. It's a program that the cut was going to come through in November and hit -- gave people 30 days' notice on not having it anymore.

Today it's also my pleasure that the good Chairwoman of Human Services agreed to working with me and finding solutions to this program and ways that we can move the state along and move it so that our most vulnerable aren't attacked and aren't afraid of losing these benefits.

So, through you, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to once again vote this, override it, and let's move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Will you remark further? Representative Urban of the 43rd District, you have the floor, Madam.

REP. URBAN (43RD):

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I did speak on this before, so I will keep this brief. But I do believe that the way that we are funding this is disingenuous. We now have until July to actually work through this and get it funded the right way. When we have taken an additional 1 percent to our teachers for the pension and then we're flipping that money in to do the Medicare Savings Plan and we're using some creative accounting from year-to-year to fund the Medicare Savings Plan. I cannot, in good conscience, say that this is the way that we should be funding this. I can, in good conscience, say that program is a necessity. That there is no question that every

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person in this Chamber wants this program to succeed. That we understand the underlying benefits of it, but I also understand it needs to be done in a fiscally responsible way so that our seniors and our disabled can rest assured that this is taken care of. And the way that it's funded today, they cannot rest easy, though we are doing the thing that is going to give them security.

Again, we have until July to get it right. I would tell you that I'm going to be voting the same way that I did last time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, Madam. Will you remark further? If not, will staff and guest please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Members to the Chamber. The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Members to the Chamber.

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SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Have all the members voted? If all the members have voted, please check the board to ensure your vote's been properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked, and the Clerk will take a tally.

The Clerk will now announce that tally.

CLERK:

Emergency Certification 7601.

Total Number of Voting	135
Necessary for Re-Passage	101
Those Voting Yea	131
Those Voting Nay	4
Those absent and not voting	15

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The bill is re-passed. (Gavel)

Representative Ritter, the Majority Leader, for what purposes do you rise, sir?

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we immediately transmit all Resolutions that require further action by the Senate to the Senate.

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SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Are there any objections to immediate  
transmittal? Are there any objections to immediate  
transmittal? If not, so ordered. (Gavel)

Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn  
the veto session sine die.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The question is on adjournment of the veto  
session, sine die; is there objection? Is there  
objection? Hearing none, the House veto session is  
adjourned sine die. (Gavel)

(On motion of Representative Ritter of the 1st  
District, the House adjourned at 11:37 o'clock a.m.,  
sine die.)