

**SENATE BILL NO. 844**

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 844 with my recommendations for reconsideration.

Senate Bill No. 844, Assembly Bill No. 2762 (First Reprint), Assembly Bill No. 2763 (First Reprint), and Assembly Bill No. 4118 all address various aspects of our temporary disability and family leave insurance systems. Senate Bill No. 844 would establish a partial return to work program allowing for the payment of temporary disability insurance ("TDI") benefits to temporarily disabled workers. The program will enable workers to return to work on a reduced basis while recovering from disability and receiving a reduced benefit.

I unequivocally support the expansion of these benefits for workers in the State, and will continue to work with the Legislature on future legislation addressing shortfalls in coverage, underutilization by vulnerable populations, and inequities in benefit administration. I have identified, however, significant issues with the infrastructure supporting these programs. As a result, I am concerned that these bills require changes that will render the Department of Labor and Workforce Development ("DOLWD") unable to administer the benefits contemplated by the bills, and will disrupt the timely delivery of all benefits managed by the system. I have recommended an extension of the effective dates of the bills to allow additional time for the Department to implement these measures.

In the interim, I have directed the DOLWD to work with the Office of Information Technology on coordinating a strategy for implementation and locating opportunities for much-needed modernization of the Department's computer systems.

Accordingly, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 844 and recommend that it be amended as follows:

Page 3, Section 3, Line 35: Delete "on the 180<sup>th</sup> day" and insert "one year"

[seal]

Respectfully,

Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Matthew J. Platkin

Chief Counsel to the Governor