

July 18, 2013

SENATE BILL NO. 2163

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 2163 without my approval.

This bill would entitle non-certificated school staff, including bus drivers, security guards, cafeteria aides, and teacher assistants, the right to submit all disputes regarding disciplinary actions to binding arbitration, regardless of any existing negotiated agreements to the contrary, and without regard to the reasons for the disciplinary actions taken.

Over the last three years, working together with the Legislature, my Administration has achieved historic, bi-partisan reforms that balance workers' rights with effective, responsible, and financially sound government. Our partnership has led to the enactment the landmark comprehensive health and pension benefit reform, and the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for Children of New Jersey ("TEACHNJ") Act. The TEACHNJ Act was the culmination of a two-year-long bi-partisan effort to enact the bold education reform, and provided tenured school employees the right to arbitrate disciplinary disputes. The result was a thoughtful balance of arbitration rights and enhanced accountability.

This bill does not strike a similar careful compromise. Instead, this bill expands arbitration procedures and tenure-like protections to non-certificated staff without any matching performance measures or assurance of cost-efficiency. Indeed, this bill has the potential to impose burdensome and expensive administrative procedures on every school district, diverting resources from our students, teachers, and classrooms. That result is inconsistent with the efforts of so many across the

State to make New Jersey's education system, and our children, ready for the challenges of the Twenty-First Century.

Accordingly, I cannot support this legislation and I herewith return Senate Bill No. 2163 without my approval.

Respectfully,

[seal]

/s/ Chris Christie
Governor

Attest:

/s/ Charles B. McKenna
Chief Counsel to the Governor