

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 2264 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

For too long, our education system has failed students in distressed, urban communities. As part of my Administration's efforts to address this problem and to improve student achievement, in 2012, I signed into law the innovative "Urban Hope Act." The Act enables Camden, Newark, and Trenton to partner with one or more experienced non-profit entities that commit to both construct new "renaissance schools" and offer rigorous academic programs that will prepare each student for college or career. Since then, several projects have been approved by the Department of Education and construction is underway, with new schools scheduled to open in Camden beginning in the fall of 2014.

This bill continues that progress. It amends the Urban Hope Act by extending the application period one year for Camden projects and by providing additional flexibility to non-profit partners. Specifically, the bill allows renaissance projects to utilize substantially reconstructed existing facilities, instead of only newly constructed facilities, as long as the first facility in the project is newly constructed and houses at least twenty percent of students enrolled in the project. It also clarifies that renaissance projects may use temporary facilities pending completion of the newly constructed or substantially reconstructed facilities. In addition, the amendments align the renaissance school facility standards to those pertaining to charter schools, while upholding health and safety standards. I believe these amendments are reasonable, measured, and

appropriately crafted to address the realities of financing and launching successful renaissance school projects.

However, the bill also authorizes early retirement incentives to certain school district employees, and may exacerbate the solvency of the pension system. Therefore, I recommend removing the early retirement provisions from the bill.

Accordingly, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 2264 (First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

- Page 2, Section 1, Lines 7-35: Delete in their entirety
- Page 2, Section 2, Line 37: Delete "2." and insert "1."
- Page 3, Section 3, Line 47: Delete "3." and insert "2."
- Page 5, Section 4, Line 47: Delete "4." and insert "3."
- Page 7, Section 5, Line 15: Delete "5." and insert "4."
- Page 21, Section 6, Line 9: Delete "6." and insert "5."
- Page 21, Section 7, Lines 21-48: Delete in their entirety
- Page 22, Section 7, Lines 1-48: Delete in their entirety
- Page 23, Section 7, Lines 1-48: Delete in their entirety
- Page 24, Section 7, Lines 1-14: Delete in their entirety
- Page 24, Section 8, Line 16: Delete "8." and insert "6."

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

[seal]

Attest:

/s/ Paul B. Matey

Deputy Chief Counsel to the Governor