

**SENATE BILL NO. 1770
(First Reprint)**

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 1770 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

This bill allows a private plan or the State plan to pay partial temporary disability insurance benefits to temporarily disabled persons who return to work on a reduced basis. Under the bill, the benefit payment would be reduced according to the amount of income the person earns. The bill does not require employers to offer light-duty assignments, but merely defines how temporary disability insurance benefits should be paid if an employer permits such work. This is a sensible proposal that will encourage people to transition back to work and may ultimately lessen employer and employee contributions to disability programs.

My concerns with the bill relate to timing. While the bill would take effect immediately, and apply retroactively to work that began after January 1 of this year, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development currently lacks the infrastructure to implement the proposed program. It is therefore appropriate to adjust the effective date of the bill to ensure that the Department will be able to implement the program properly. Therefore, the bill shall be revised to contain a new effective date one-hundred and eighty days after enactment. This small, sensible transition period will ensure that New Jersey workers and employers are able to participate in this new program without unnecessary regulatory complications.

Accordingly, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 1770 (First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

Page 3, Section 2, Line 1:

Delete "January 1, 2015"
and insert "the
effective date of P.L.
, c. (pending before
the Legislature as this
bill)"

Page 3, Section 3, Line 34:

Delete "immediately" and
insert "on the 180th day
after the date of
enactment"

[seal]

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Christopher S. Porrino

Chief Counsel to the Governor