

June 29, 2015

SENATE BILL NO. 866

To the Senate:

For the second time in just three years, the Legislature has passed a bill that seeks to radically alter the legal rights of parents, insert the courts into sensitive decisions concerning procreation, and reduce the mystery and majesty of creation to a contract. As I stated in 2012, I do not support the establishment of a new system of child-birth that places a legally binding agreement between a woman, and the child she is carrying. Accordingly, pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 866 without my approval.

This bill seeks to make gestational carrier agreements enforceable under the contract laws of this State. Once signed, this contract would legally bind a woman to carry and give birth to a child with whom she has no genetic relationship, on behalf of another party. This legal arrangement establishes a contractual relationship between the intended parent and the gestational surrogate, with the subject of the contract the yet to be born child.

In 2012, I vetoed this identical bill. I did so because of the significant ethical and moral concerns raised by a government-enforced system of agreements to procreate. I have repeatedly stated that every life is precious, and every human deserving of protection. I take seriously the need to guard against any societal deprecation of the miracle of life. Accordingly, in my message to the Legislature, I stressed the need for further inquiry and consensus before codifying such a profound shift in public policy.

Unfortunately, rather than work with interested parties to address concerns raised during the initial debate on this bill and craft a measure that could be supported by a wider coalition, the Legislature instead passed the same bill without making even a single change. Indeed, the bill even carelessly fails to correctly reference the new statutory name for the Department of Health. It should therefore come as no surprise that I remain unconvinced that the Legislature has addressed the myriad social, moral, and ethical questions presented by this bill.

Accordingly, I am returning Senate Bill No. 866 without my approval.

[seal]

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Christopher S. Porrino

Chief Counsel to the Governor