

Office of the Vermont Secretary of State
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Veto Message: Governor Hartness
1921 (S.85)

An act to amend section 1416 of the General Laws, relating to the expenses of mentally defective persons.

STATE OF VERMONT
Executive Department.
Montpelier, Vt., March 25, 1921.

Which had been returned by His Excellency, the Governor, without his approval and with his objections thereto in writing as follows:

To the Honorable Senate:

I have the honor to return, without my approval, Senate bill, entitled

S. 85. An act to amend section 1416 of the General Laws, relating to the expenses of mentally defective persons.

The towns and cities of the State should be partners with the State in looking after the care of our idiotic, feeble-minded and epileptic persons. This bill wholly relieves towns and cities of responsibility for the care of such unfortunates when placed in a State institution. In my judgment this is not wise. This class of persons far exceeds the deaf, dumb and blind. To relieve towns wholly of obligation to care for such persons as public charges, casts upon the State a greater burden than it should be expected to bear. As the law now exists, a town may be required to bind itself to indemnify the State against expenses which may accrue in consequence of the sickness, clothing and transportation of idiotic, feeble-minded and epileptic persons, before the State assumes the burden of their care. This is a just and reasonable provision.

The decision of the officials of towns or cities to furnish bonds when required, as a prerequisite to assuming the care of these

unfortunate persons on the part of the State, in many instances sufficient warrant for relieving the towns of their care. Without such cooperation of the town and city authorities, it will become necessary in many instances, in investigation of cases, to expend in the aggregate a considerable portion of the appropriations available for the support of these persons in State institutions.

Unless the towns are willing to bear the smaller portion of expense, which now averages about thirty-five dollars per year for each inmate at our school at Brandon, it will be necessary for the State to provide an additional biennial appropriation of from ten to fifteen thousand dollars. This additional appropriation will be but the beginning of the creation of an expensive department, requiring numerous assistants to investigate the merits of each case as presented. Operating under the law as it now exists, the Governor is enabled through co-operation with the local authorities, to get first-hand, accurate and reliable information upon which to base a decision as to whether the State should assume the care of Applicants.

JAMES HARTNESS,
Governor

Governor's Veto Sustained
S.85, 1921

The Governor's veto was sustained in the Senate:
Yeas 0 Nays 27

Sources: *Journal of the Senate*, March 26, 1921 (pages 549-551)