

PHILIP B. SCOTT
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

May 2, 2022

The Honorable John Bloomer, Jr.
Secretary of the Senate
115 State House
Montpelier, VT 05633-5401

Dear Mr. Bloomer:

Pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution, I am returning S.286, *An act relating to amending various public pension and other postemployment benefits*, without my signature because of my objections described herein.

Since the day after this bill was introduced, before it was voted out of a single committee, in either chamber of the General Assembly, I have been clear it does not include enough structural change to solve the enormous unfunded liability problems the State faces. I offered balanced solutions, which were disregarded.

It is unfortunate this veto will likely be easily overridden, not for me, but for Vermont taxpayers and State employees who will bear the burden in the future. I will acknowledge, this bill takes some positive steps, and the easiest thing for me to do would be to sign it, assure the public we solved the problem, and move on.

But given the scope of this problem and the risk it poses to the financial health of our state, I cannot bring myself to do that. It would be disingenuous because I know we could have done better.

The fact is, in several years – despite adding a quarter of a billion dollars in *additional* money (on top of the roughly \$400 million for our regular, required payment) from taxpayers – the state will be faced with the same unsustainable system we have today.

I won't be governor when those chickens come home to roost, and many of you will not be serving in your current roles, either. But the Legislature's unwillingness to question the deal reached between a handful of union and legislative representatives will come back to haunt our state in the not-too-distant future.

And when it does, we won't have the unprecedented level of federal funds and state surplus dollars at our disposal, and the fix will be tougher on both taxpayers and public employees.

Sincerely,

Philip B. Scott
Governor