

May 21, 1999

SENATE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 5

The Honorable Manny M. Aragon and

Members of the Senate

Executive-Legislative Building

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503

Honorable President and Members of the Senate:

I have this day VETOED and am returning SENATE BILL 14, as amended, with emergency clause, enacted by the Forty-Fourth Legislature, First Special Session, 1999.

This legislation would have increased equalization funds distributed to school districts based on the number of certified teachers employed in each district. The bill would have further mandated that each certified teacher receive a one-time salary increase at least equal to the funds generated by this provision. This bill would have been an unnecessary complication of the public school funding formula that already includes a training and experience component.

Quality teachers are essential to a quality education. Quality can be achieved through high standards for teacher preparation, licensure and ongoing evaluation; by holding our colleges of education accountable for teacher preparation; and the implementation of a statewide teacher merit pay system.

The legislature's repeated attempts to fund the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) fails to address the many issues surrounding the NBPTS: 1. the national standards are often vague platitudes; 2. there may be more cost effective ways to identify superior teachers; 3. NBPTS certification is a poor substitute for merit pay; and 4. the NBPTS's reliance upon student portfolios, applicant essays and videotapes – all supplied by the teacher.

Until convincing data is provided to address these concerns and until other actions and reforms are taken to improve teacher quality, we must resist expansion of the NBPTS program in New Mexico.

Sincerely,

Gary E. Johnson

Governor