

**ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 3500
(Third Reprint)**

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 3500 (Third Reprint) without my approval.

This bill would require all municipal or county recreation departments and nonprofit youth athletic leagues to make an automated external defibrillator ("AED") available on-site at every practice and athletic event played on public fields.

I am proud of the many steps we have taken to safeguard the lives of New Jersey children through more rigorous screening of student-athletes and better emergency preparedness. Thanks to "Janet's Law," a bill I signed in 2012, all schools in New Jersey now have an AED on their premises and emergency action plans in place with properly trained and designated staff to handle sudden, life-threatening events. In addition, before they participate in sports, student-athletes now receive comprehensive physical evaluations by medical professionals who have completed new cardiac screening modules pursuant to the 2013 "Scholastic Student-Athlete Safety Act." Building further on these successes, in 2014, we enacted a new law that requires high school students to receive hands-on training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an AED. These efforts, among others, will save lives.

While I support efforts to improve emergency precautions in youth sports, I cannot ignore the reasonable concerns expressed by municipalities, counties, and nonprofit youth athletic leagues regarding the bill's scope and impact. In particular, the bill would require virtually every coach of a youth sports team - typically an unpaid volunteer or parent - to bring an AED to every practice and game if a device is not already on-site.

As a result, countless municipalities, counties, and nonprofit youth athletic leagues would have to purchase thousands of AEDs and rely on coaches to ensure the device's availability at every practice and game.

The Legislature's own analysis of this bill forecasts that this requirement would result in an indeterminate cost burden for municipalities and counties. More precisely, according to recreation departments and nonprofit youth athletic leagues, the bill would cost between \$20 and \$40 million initially and millions more each year for equipment, maintenance, and replacement costs. These costs are likely to be passed down to parents in the form of higher league entry fees, potentially pricing out some families whose children would otherwise participate in, and enjoy, recreational sports.

Mindful of these concerns, a more balanced approach is to entrust these decisions to local communities, which are best situated to assess the needs of their residents and the necessary and appropriate health precautions for local athletic events within their available resources.

Accordingly, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 3500 (Third Reprint) without my approval.

[seal]

Respectfully,
/s/ Chris Christie
Governor

Attest:

/s/ Thomas P. Scrivo
Chief Counsel to the Governor