

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
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MITT ROMNEY
GOVERNOR

KERRY HEALEY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

December 22, 2004.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

Pursuant to Part the Second, Chapter I, Section I, Article II of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, I am returning unsigned House Bill No. 4466, "An Act Relative to Creditable Service for Ambulance Paramedics in the Town of Billerica."

House Bill No. 4466 would change the group classification of ambulance paramedics in the Town of Billerica from Group 2 to Group 4 for the purpose of the state's retirement system. Essentially, this legislation would allow the town's paramedics to retire with full benefits at age 55.

Although the bill states that the Town of Billerica will bear all additional costs triggered by its passage, the normal operation of state pension law makes this claim doubtful. For instance, it is entirely possible, if not probable, that an employee of the Town of Billerica receiving a benefit from this bill would at some time be employed by other public entity in the Commonwealth. Such an entity, as a result of this bill's enactment into law, would bear greater pension liabilities.

I should also note that if the General Court had enacted the pension reform proposal in my fiscal year 2005 budget (House Bill No. 1a) this concern might have been alleviated. I had proposed that employees' pension benefits would be prorated based on time in Group 1, 2 or 4.

For these reasons, I am returning to you House Bill No. 4466 unsigned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. T. Romney".

MITT ROMNEY,
Governor.

