

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133, April 28, 1972

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

I am returning, herewith, without my approval, House Bill No. 5437 entitled "AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE POSTING OF FOUR-WAY STOP SIGNS AT CERTAIN INTERSECTIONS IN CITIES AND TOWNS."

This bill provides that a city or town may by regulation authorize the posting of four-way stop signs at intersections under their jurisdiction, removing the present requirement that approval be granted by the department of public works.

Present law allows cities and towns to establish traffic signals and stop signs at intersections, but only with departmental approval. Changing this practice with respect only to four-way stop signs has several disadvantages. First, it will result in a proliferation of these signs due to local pressures that would destroy their effectiveness and make enforcement by local police difficult.

Secondly, G.L. c.89, s.8 requires that the right of way at an intersection be given to the first vehicle which enter the intersection, or to the vehicle entering from the right if both enter at the same time. This law is superseded only if a stop sign is placed at the intersection with the approval of the department of public works. Stop signs authorized under this act would not have this approval, and therefore the right of way rules, not the sign, would have legal priority.

Cities' and towns' authority under existing law to adopt regulations providing for four-way stop signs provides a penalty of twenty dollars for violation. G.L. c.40, s.22. This bill contains no penalty clause, however.

I believe the need for uniformity, not only in size and type of signs, but also with respect to the engineering standards which are used to determine in which locations signs would be feasible, dictates that this type of legislation should not be approved. In addition, the bill as presently drafted appears inconsistent with state law concerning the right of way at intersections and is unenforceable for lack

of a penalty clause.

For the above reasons, I cannot in good conscience approve the measure and I return the bill without my approval.

Respectfully submitted,

FRANCIS W. SARGENT

Governor