



STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SPRINGFIELD 62706

JAMES R. THOMPSON
GOVERNOR

September 13, 1977

To the Honorable Members
of the House of Representatives
80th General Assembly

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Constitution of 1970, I hereby veto House Bill 333.

It is important for the People of Illinois to understand what this bill is, and is not, about.

This is not a bill which changes the law of abortion. The federal constitution and present Illinois law require that, with certain exceptions, the choice of abortion is the choice of the woman alone. No governor and no legislature have the power to change the Constitution and the law.

This is not a bill to reduce the costs of public aid. In fact, signing it would have the opposite effect. The cost of caring for women who, denied abortions under Medicaid attempted self-abortions or retreated to back alley butchers, would be much higher. But that is irrelevant. If this bill is law, desperate women may be driven to attempt measures which not only would threaten, and in some cases take their lives, but may, in many instances, leave, by their deaths, other children without a mother. In fact, over one half of the persons now therapeutically aborted at Cook County Hospital in Chicago have other children. I cannot, in conscience, put my name on such a bill.

This bill does not allow for Medicaid assistance for the victims of rape or incest, but requires that they carry the product of such criminal acts to full term. It seems strange to me that a government so concerned in other ways, with the victims of crime, could treat, in such cruel fashion, the helpless victims of man's ultimate inhumanity to women. This bill says, in effect, that the victim of rape or incest, if wealthy, may terminate a criminally induced pregnancy, but a victim who is poor may not. I cannot, in conscience, put my name on such a bill.

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At heart, though, this bill simply denies a constitutional right to some women because they are poor. My belief is that such women will, in many cases, attempt to terminate unwanted pregnancies in other, more desperate ways. Those ways may lead to needless death and suffering - of mothers and children. I agree that life is often unfair, and that it is not within the power, or duty, of government to rectify all perceived wrongs or to satisfy all expectations. But this bill is more than unfair; it is cruel. I cannot, in conscience, put my name on such a bill.

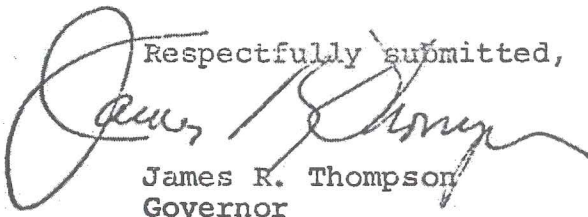
I can understand the intent of the sponsors and the members of the General Assembly. I am sure they did not intend the cruel results which I foresee if this bill becomes law. Our legislators are not cruel people.

I also understand that, in vetoing this bill, I depart from the position expressed by the President of the United States, the Congress of the United States, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the General Assembly of Illinois. I also believe that in so acting, I am going against the sentiment of a majority of the people of Illinois, though I believe with all my heart that such a view would not be held by our citizens if they would thoughtfully consider what I have said in this message. Our people are not a cruel people.

In the end, a man can act only out of a sense of duty and conscience. The Constitution of Illinois confers that duty upon the Governor and my conscience has told me how to answer it, whatever the political cost.

I hereby return House Bill 333, withholding my approval, and ask you to prayerfully and carefully consider the human consequences involved if you reaffirm your initial decision that this bill shall be law.

Respectfully submitted,



James R. Thompson
Governor

JRT:cv