



Dannel P. Malloy

GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

June 24, 2015

I hereby return, without my signature, Senate Bill 859, *An Act Concerning Program Approval for Independent Institutions of Higher Education*. This bill, as amended, removes the Office of Higher Education from any role in approving new and revised academic programs for certain non-profit higher education institutions and was approved without an opportunity for input from the public or the affected agency.

In 2013 I directed the Office of Higher Education to work with the State's independent colleges and universities to develop a more streamlined process for program approval which resulted in Public Act 13-118 which reduced the time frame for such approvals. While I recognize that more work needs to be done to continue the process begun in 2013, if oversight is to be removed or altered it should be done with the appropriate input and information as to the entirety of the higher education programs subject to regulation. Parents and students should be assured that the programs offered meet Connecticut's rigorous standards for academic quality.

For these reasons, I disapprove of Senate Bill 859, *An Act Concerning Program Approval for Independent Institutions of Higher Education*. Pursuant to Section 15 of Article Fourth of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, I am returning Senate Bill 859 without my signature.