STATE OF ARIZONA

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May 8, 2007

The Honorable Timothy S. Bee
President
Arizona State Senate
1700 West Washington Street
Senate Office Building
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: Senate Bill 1183: early graduation scholarship program; funding

Dear President Bee:

Today I vetoed Senate Bill 1183, which would have offered scholarships to in-state and out-of-state post secondary institutions and vocational programs for students who graduate early from public high schools or charter schools.

I share the goal of the sponsor of this bill to increase scholarship assistance and reward both our schools and our students who achieve academic excellence. Unfortunately, this bill was amended hastily through the striker process and flaws that could easily have been fixed were not.

One such flaw is that there is no requirement that the institution or vocational program that the student wishes to attend be accredited. Public scholarship monies should go only to accredited institutions and programs. A second flaw is that the bill leaves to each school district and charter school the administrative burden and discretion for awarding scholarships, determining what constitutes a qualifying school, and ensuring that the student remains eligible for the scholarship. This essentially would create hundreds of school bureaucracies with no uniformity of eligibility criteria or accountability. If we are to do a program like this, it should be run by a single agency accountable for achieving consistent, appropriate, and reliable results.

I look forward to working with the bill sponsor to address these and other problems with this bill.

Yours very truly,

Janet Napolitano
Governor

JN:TAN/jm

cc: The Honorable Jim Weiers
The Honorable Jay Tibshraeny