

STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SPRINGFIELD, 62706GEORGE H. RYAN
GOVERNOR

August 3, 2001

To the Honorable Members of the
Illinois House of Representatives
92nd General Assembly

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby veto and return House Bill 3377 entitled "AN ACT concerning industrial hemp."

House Bill 3377 authorizes the University of Illinois to study the feasibility and desirability of industrial hemp (cannabis) production, subject to the availability of non-State funding. The study is to include an analysis of required soils, growing conditions, seed availability, varieties, harvest methods, market economies, and environmental benefits. It also requires the research to include development of hemp varieties with a zero level of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in cannabis/marijuana. Western Illinois University of Illinois is required to obtain all federal and state permits needed to legally grow industrial hemp for research purposes.

This bill is similar to Senate Bill 1397 in the 91st General Assembly, which I vetoed. The sponsors to House Bill 3377 have made a good-faith effort to address the concerns that I raised in my prior veto. However, I still believe that this bill is unnecessary. Though I believe the sponsor's sole purpose is to promote this research in an effort to benefit legitimate agricultural producers in Illinois, this legislation nonetheless plays into the national strategy of groups seeking to remove existing criminal penalties for cannabis/marijuana possession and use. The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) is the principal national advocate for legalization of marijuana. NORML has told its members to: "Encourage farm organizations to endorse hemp cultivation: The American farm industry is one of America's most influential lobbies on both the national and state level." I am sure the sponsors of House Bill 3377 and the agricultural interest groups supporting it are as uncomfortable as I am with his unintended connection.

Further, as I stated in my veto of Senate Bill 1397, I cannot ignore the concerns of the drug prevention and treatment groups that the ultimate commercial cultivation and availability of a product that contains a potentially mind-altering substance would leave open the prospect of substance abuse. This would send a mixed message to the youth of our State. I recognize that House Bill 3377 is only authorizing cultivation for research purposes but, nonetheless, it is a step toward full commercial cultivation.

Many studies have already been done on industrial hemp that indicate it is unlikely to move beyond the current small niche market to large-scale commercial production. A United States Department of Agriculture study concluded that industrial hemp production "will be unable to sustain adequate profit margins for a large scale production sector to develop." The Office of National Drug Control Policy found that "for every proposed use of industrial hemp, there already exists an available product, or raw material, which is cheaper to manufacture and provides better market results." The federal Drug Enforcement Agency state that is has never been approached by a major clothing, food, paper, fiber or textile company with an interest in the cultivation of hemp supplies. Finally, a University of Kentucky study found that in the countries where industrial hemp is

currently grown, none have a thriving hemp industry and many are reducing their already small hemp acreage. In April 2001, Governor Jane Dee Hull of Arizona vetoes a similar bill in her State. She too cited the numerous studies that have already been done and stated: "with this study already complete, the need for additional study by our universities is dubious."

Finally, House Bill 3377 is only necessary to allow the University of Illinois to actually grow industrial hemp for research purposes, if licensed to do so by the federal government. The University of Illinois, without House Bill 3377, can conduct privately funded research on the economic feasibility, processing costs, comparison with current alternatives and the long term prospect for development of sustainable markets for industrial hemp. Likewise, Western Illinois University does not need House Bill 3377 to study what effect legalization of industrial hemp would have on the enforcement of existing laws prohibiting possession, sale and use of cannabis. Therefore, I do not see the need to authorize growing industrial hemp as part of any such study.

For these reasons, I hereby veto and return House Bill 3377.

Sincerely,
s/GEORGE H. RYAN
Governor