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Kid's Eyes Count Campaign

August 29, 2007

To the Honorable Members of the Illinois 95th General Assembly

RE: Governor's Amendatory Veto of Senate Bill 641—Required Vision Exam

Dear Senator or Representative:

August 11, 2003, Governor Blagojevich signed Senate Bill 805 into Illinois law requiring specific written notification before a vision screening is conducted. (PA 93-0504) I initiated this legislation with my State Senator Christine Radogno after my daughter's eye examination found what vision screenings missed—high refractive error with a significant amount of astigmatism requiring glasses so strong she needed to be eased into her prescription.

Did you know twenty years ago Governor Thompson signed the Vision Examination Bill into Illinois law recommending schools require vision examinations by an eye doctor with the health examinations for all children entering kindergarten, fifth and ninth grades? Unfortunately, hundreds of schools in Illinois disregarded this recommended requirement because it wasn't a "state mandate."

I recognized a great need for education regarding children's vision. In 2004, I prepared the resolution, "Required Vision Examination Before Entering Kindergarten." Illinois PTA adopted the resolution at their 104th annual convention. The Illinois Federation of Teachers adopted the same resolution the following year. It was this resolution that led the teacher's union to initiate Senate Bill 641.

I am shocked Governor Blagojevich vetoed this legislation regarding children's vision, which was unanimously supported by the 95th Illinois General Assembly. The Governor's "specific recommendations for change" reduces the required eye examination by a licensed eye doctor to *a misleading vision screening by those unlicensed to perform eye care*. Doesn't our Governor remember what he signed into Illinois law four years ago? Public Act 93-0504 confirms: "Vision screening is *not a substitute* for a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor."

On behalf of the new non-profit organization I formed for children's eye examinations, Vision First Foundation believes all children deserve the best start possible for a lifetime of learning. **We urge the 95th Illinois General Assembly to raise the standards of eye care for our children's visual welfare and immediately override this veto.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Make a difference in the eyes of a child