ATTACHMENT E

July 8, 2016

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

 Pursuant to Article LVI, as amended by Article XC, Section 3 of the Amendments to the Constitution, I am returning to you for amendment Section 24 of House Bill No. 4450, “An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2017 for the Maintenance of the Departments, Boards, Commissions, Institutions and Certain Activities of the Commonwealth, for Interest, Sinking Fund and Serial Bond Requirements and for Certain Permanent Improvements.”

Section 24 amends the process for appointing the Child Advocate to be more inclusive, now requiring the majority vote of the Governor, Attorney General and State Auditor from a list of three candidates nominated by a committee of child welfare leaders and stakeholders. It also provides that in the event of a vacancy, the Child Advocate’s successor shall be appointed in the same manner for the remainder of the unexpired term. While more inclusive, this new process will require more time and deliberation, potentially leaving the position of Child Advocate unfilled for some extended amount of time if there is an unexpected vacancy. Such a gap in leadership could disrupt progress in advancing the welfare of the Commonwealth’s children and the delivery of critical services.

For these reasons, I recommend that Section 24 be amended by inserting in line 207 after the word “term” the following words:- “, except the governor may appoint an acting child advocate who shall serve until the appointment of a successor”.

Respectfully submitted,