



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 30 2026

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 944 without my signature.

This bill would remove the limitation that requires federal matching funds for the coverage of acupuncture services within Medi-Cal, making acupuncture a covered Medi-Cal benefit regardless of the availability of federal funds.

I appreciate the author's intent to ensure vulnerable populations continue to have access to acupuncture as a treatment option in the Medi-Cal program. However, should federal financial participation become unavailable for acupuncture services in the future, this bill would require the Department of Health Care Services to cover these services with state-only funds. This could create additional cost pressures on the State General Fund of approximately \$10 million to \$20 million annually.

In partnership with the Legislature this year, my administration has enacted a balanced budget that recognizes the challenging fiscal landscape our state faces while maintaining our commitment to working families and our most vulnerable communities. With significant fiscal pressures and the federal government's hostile economic policies, it is vital that we remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom