



**For immediate release:
Wednesday, May 22, 2002**



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The Honorable Don Samuelson
President of the Senate
121 State Capitol
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear President Samuelson:

I have vetoed and am returning Chapter Number 391, House File Number 2598, a bill requiring school pledge of allegiance recitation.

I am vetoing this bill because I believe patriotism comes from the heart. Patriotism is voluntary. It is a feeling of loyalty and allegiance that is the result of knowledge and belief. A patriot shows their patriotism through their actions, by their choice.

Chapter 391 is not about choice. In Chapter 391, the State mandates patriotic actions and displays. Our government should not dictate actions. The United States of America exists because people wanted to be free to choose. All of us should have free choice when it comes to patriotic displays.

According to *West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette* (U.S. Supreme Court, 319 U.S. 624, 1943), the action of the local authorities in compelling the flag salute and pledge transcends constitutional limitations on their power, and invades the sphere of intellect and spirit which it is the purpose of the First Amendment to our Constitution to reserve from all official control.

This case went on to state that words uttered under coercion are proof of loyalty to nothing but self-interest. Love of country must spring from willing hearts and free minds, inspired by a fair administration of wise laws enacted by the people's elected representatives within the bounds of express constitutional prohibitions. In other words, a government wisely acting within its bounds will earn loyalty and respect from its citizens. A government dare not demand the same.

There is much more to being a patriot and a citizen than reciting the pledge or raising a flag. Patriots serve. Patriots vote. Patriots attend meetings in their community. Patriots pay attention to the actions of government and speak out when needed. Patriots teach their children about our history, our precious

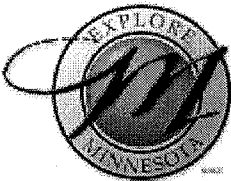
democracy and about citizenship. Being an active, engaged citizen means being a patriotic American every day. No law will make a citizen a patriot.

For these reasons, I vetoed this bill.

Sincerely,

Jesse Ventura
Governor

c: Senator Roger Moe, Majority Leader
Senator Dick Day, Minority Leader
Representative Steve Sviggum, Speaker of the House
Representative Tom Pugh, Minority Leader
Senator Mady Reiter
Representative George Cassel
Mr. Patrick E. Flahaven, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Edward A. Burdick, Chief Clerk of the House
Ms. Mary Kiffmeyer, Secretary of State



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