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EXECUTIVE AND OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were received.

January 16, 1992.

The Honorable Jerome M. Hughes
President of the Senate

Dear President Hughes:

I have vetoed and am returning Chapter 364, Senate File 1598/House File 1731, a bill relating to elections.

For years Minnesota has taken pride in having the nation's highest voter turnout. And that high turnout rate is no accident. We teach the importance of participation in our schools, sponsor statewide voter turnout campaigns, and have eased procedural requirements with election day registration. The creation of a presidential primary is simply the latest step in the continuing effort to expand voter participation in Minnesota's electoral process.

This policy of promoting voter participation has produced outstanding leaders in both political parties, and given us a national reputation for open, effective government. The presidential primary continues that process. The bill repealing it takes us back in the opposite direction. Because I believe that each of us in elected government has an obligation to maximize the opportunity for the average voter to participate in government decisions, I am vetoing Chapter 364 which would cancel the 1992 presidential primary.

Whatever can be said about the caucus system in theory, in practice it has drawn an average participation of about 3% of Minnesota voters. This is simply too small a pool to determine such critical decisions as Minnesota's position on candidates for President of the United States. By the most conservative estimates, the primary will increase that participation 15 - 20 times over. That alone is reason enough to reject legislation cancelling the primary.

I recognize that some communities have expressed concern about the cost of conducting the primary. But the cost of this election is no greater than the cost of any other - no greater than the cost of mayoral, school board, or general elections, no greater than the cost of bond referendums. If cost is sufficient reason to cancel this election, it is sufficient reason to cancel any election. And that is not in the public interest.

Many communities have already included the cost of the primary in their levy. However, having to manage an extremely tight state budget in difficult economic times, I understand the burden that any additional expenditure places on Minnesota counties, cities and townships. Provided that it is part of an overall balanced budget, I would be willing to support legislation that would permit the state to ease this burden by sharing a portion of the cost of conducting the primary.

The remaining arguments raised against the primary are not persuasive. It is not true that the primary is a mere beauty contest. While Democrat delegates will not be bound by its results because of their party rules, Republican delegates are legally bound to cast their votes in accordance with the primary's result. Even on the Democrat side, the results will have significant influence. It is inconceivable to me that Minnesota's delegates to a Democratic National Convention would cast their votes for a candidate different from the one endorsed by their won party members in an open, statewide primary.

The reluctance of some individuals to declare their party affiliation is a reality, and an understandable one. But it is not an argument against holding

a primary. A voter who signs up at a party precinct caucus makes every bit as public a declaration of party affiliation as a voter who registers at a primary. Moreover, analysis of the polling data shows that those who affiliate with political parties have little problem with party declaration. The principal objection comes from independents - and that it is entirely appropriate. They have, after all, chosen not to affiliate with either party. But it is equally appropriate that the decision on party nominees should be reserved for those who have made a decision to affiliate with a party. By choosing to decline party affiliation independents choose to bypass the nominating phase of the election process. But they normally play a decisive role in the general election. The bottom line is that the primary does not force a party declaration on anyone unwilling to make it. This is the same system used in more than thirty other states, and it has served the public well for many years.

Cancelling the primary represents exactly the opposite of what our electoral system has stood for for many decades. I want Minnesota's electoral decisions to be made by the many, not by the few, and am therefore vetoing Chapter 364.

Sincerely,
Arne H. Carlson, Governor

Mr. Moe, R.D. moved that S.F. No. 1598 and the veto message thereon be laid on the table. The motion prevailed.

January 17, 1992

The Honorable Jerome M. Hughes
President of the Senate

Dear President Hughes:

I have vetoed Chapter 361, Senate File 1612/House File 1758, the legislation removing the time limit on work readiness benefits.

The work readiness program was established in 1985 to extend benefits similar to General Assistance to able-bodied individuals who would otherwise be ineligible for General Assistance payments. In the 1991 session, both houses of the Minnesota Legislature voted by large margins to set the duration of the program at five months.

Chapter 361, Senate File 1612/House File 1758 would extend that eligibility for an additional three months at a short term cost of \$3.4 million. It is important to recognize that this is only a short term cost because, while the bill would expire on the first of May, it has been described by its advocates as a mechanism to extend benefits until the Legislature returns and can reconsider the issue in February. At that time, the Legislature would have the opportunity to consider making the extension permanent, or extending benefits to 12 months, as was done briefly in the fall of 1990. This bill is simply the first part of a larger effort, the costs of which are difficult to estimate but would likely be extremely significant.

The basic problem with the approach taken in Chapter 361 is that it increases benefits without providing any mechanism to finance the cost of the increase.