

Teri Root - message for the boss

From: Paula Stiffler
To: Teri Root
Date: 11/18/2002 1:19 PM
Subject: message for the boss

This was on the recorder and this guy talked very fast -

Kevin McCoy, State President with the West Virginia Family Institutue - read about Pledge of Allegiance bill and would like to work on something like this with Delegates and Senators in West Virginia - cell - 304-415-0407 8-4:30pm
Office is 304-965-6700.

Wants to speak with someone all about this legislation - I figured AI would be the best person.

Paula Stiffler
Rep. Allan Egolf's District Office
717-582-8119

Allan Egolf - Pledge of Allegiance Bill

From: <MarkovsE@usa.redcross.org>
To: <aegolf@pahousegop.com>
Date: 11/19/2002 11:35 AM
Subject: Pledge of Allegiance Bill

Mr. Egolf,

I am deeply concerned about your bill to require the Pledge of Allegiance in all schools in Pennsylvania. Schools are public institutions, and any event that promotes a Christian God within its text is unacceptable in such a venue. Yes, children have the right to not participate. But let's be honest, they are exactly that, children. We can all vividly remember the great social pressures in school. Psychologists have proven that social pressures during high school are higher than in any other span in people's lives. Many children will not refuse to say the pledge for fear of bullying and ridicule. Is this a way in which you wish to promote patriotism and God? It is vital that ALL stakeholders in education are taken into account, not only your conservative Christian children. In my opinion, you have failed in your duty as an American leader to promote fairness and objectivity of the American educational system. Shame on you.

Erik Markovs
1407 Meridian Pl, NW
Washington, DC 20010

Allan Egolf - Pledge and National Anthem

From: "BRYAN FINK" [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED], <aegolf@pahousegop.com>, [REDACTED],
 [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED],
 [REDACTED], "Jacquelyn M. Kremper" [REDACTED],
 [REDACTED], <RPhillips@kentlaw.edu>, [REDACTED]
Date: 11/19/2002 2:17 AM
Subject: Pledge and National Anthem
CC: <csatullo@phillynews.com>, <hkestenbaum@phillynews.com>, <trubin@phillynews.com>,
 <CNN@cnn.com>, <newera@lnpnews.com>

<http://www.cnn.com/2002/EDUCATION/11/15/pennsylvania.patriotism.ap/index.html>

To the people I have addressed this to and more specifically,
 Rep. Allan Egolf :

Although I doubt you will actually read this, I hope whomever in your staff that does appreciate the conviction of this email. As a long-time, former resident of Pennsylvania, and more specifically Lancaster, I was appalled to read the article the above link leads to on CNN's website. Forced patriotism does not teach respect for one's country and certainly mandated conformity never instilled love. The article quotes Rep. Egolf as saying, "It's getting away from teaching about what our country stands for, what our founders did, and why we have the country we have." However, isn't this law doing just that? Within the Bill of Rights, Americans have been assured the freedom of speech, which as well implies the freedom not to speak, to not recite anything that a citizen does not choose to say, including the Pledge and the National Anthem. As well, our country has always stood for and been built upon the belief that the fostering of individuality and freedom will lead citizens to develop their own conclusions, which if our country is deserving, will lead them to the patriotic state that I believe the "spirit" of this law is intending as its end goal. These steps outlined in the above article are the very ones I would expect from a government that does not believe its people will feel, of its own free will, the pride and respect that one should have if one is patriotic. Are we so afraid as a country, that our children will not grow to respect their heritage and history on their own volition, that we must mandate their conformity as children, not unlike attempting to brainwash them into being patriotic? What does this say about our country?

Furthermore, how can this law ever really be enforced? Are teens to be held back from graduation or given black marks on their records for not pledging? Is the state going to begin monitoring which teachers enforce the recital of the pledges and which will not? Why enact more unenforceable legislation? Why add to the burden of teachers who already must cope with over-crowded classrooms and / or under-budgeted programs, as well as drug abuse and weapons problems by passing a law that teaches resentment against the very values it is supposedly trying to honor? What else can come out of this for students but resentment or even non-chalance toward our heritage? Why is the state enacting this law at all? Since when did the Republican Party favor the passage of state-mandated rote patriotism instead of leaving the development of patriotism to be handled in the place it should be addressed – in the home. The parents of these children should be the ones who must instill respect for our country and history, and if they fail to do so, it is not up to the state to attempt to take their place. No law can teach respect or earn love. Only in immersing students in our history and comparing it with other countries' heritages can we do that, and still it is up to the individual to find this respect or develop this love within themselves.

I am someone, who, at every sporting event I have ever attended, has taken off my hat and sung, sometimes to myself, sometimes out loud the Star-Spangled Banner, of which I know every word of the part we sing. I do that because I did learn a great love of our past, especially of the time of our founding fathers, who worked vigorously to prevent government interference in the lives of citizens. But I learned and developed this love and respect freely, through a study of our history, and a reading of the body of work that the great minds like Thomas Paine, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and that ultimate opponent of a regulatory government, Thomas Jefferson, have left behind. If you want to teach the children of your state a greater respect for their country, do it by providing them with a better understanding of their nation's history through study, better teachers, and increased attention to education, not mandated laws enacted with good intentions, but undermined by fear.

Thank you for your time.

Bryan Fink

PS. I know many of the people I included in the email are not citizens of Pennsylvania, but I hope if any of them feel as strongly as I do that they will feel free to email the Representative as well.

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11.15.02

To require the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance is Patriotism distorted.

First, as you yourself said, "It's getting away from teaching about what our country stands for, what our founders did, and why we have the country we have." Reciting the Pledge does in no way explain why we have this country, what our founders did, and only barely touches upon what our country stands for.

Second, We are the only 'First World Nation' that has a pledge of allegiance, let alone to require it spoken daily. If you must mandate an affirmation of allegiance, then the fundamental problem does not lie in the hands of the citizens, but in the hands of its government -- due to lack of faith and pride in the governing body and fellow citizenry. Allegiance, like respect, is earned and not assumed. By mandating the recitation, you further alienate your citizens from the government that is purportedly representative, or at best, you lose the meaning of the words from the thoughtless, automatic daily recitation.

Lastly, in regard to contacting parents if the pledge is not spoken. This is simply a ploy to pressure those who do not believe in the words to continue the ritual regardless of conviction. It coerces through fear of parental reprisal, setting up yet another barrier or node of conflict between the student and teacher, and the student and parent.

The Pledge of Allegiance should be a recitation of pride and faith, not rule of law. This measure cheapens each word as they roll off the lips of the subjects. The ironic aspect of this situation is that a pledge that champions Liberty and Justice is being forced upon its young citizens. Isn't part of that very liberty of which the Pledge speaks, the Liberty to choose, and have that choice recognized in a private and dignified manner rather than create an environment whereby the transgressor is put in stigmatizing circumstances?

Isn't that, Rep. Egolf, what this country really stands for? And, would our Founding Fathers respect a law of this nature, or would they respect more a governing body which cherishes its citizens' freedom of speech (or their freedom not to speak)?

True Patriotism, Sir, is pride in one's country. Pride that is instilled by the daily actions of its citizens and its governing bodies. Perhaps if we all spent more time each day trying to help each other, improve ourselves and those around us, and make our country one that is admired not only by its citizens, but by the world as a whole for its goodness and its achievements rather than materialistic envy, selfishness and fear, people would gladly stand up and recite with pride our Pledge of Allegiance with no mandate from you.

This matter has no bearing upon my daily life as I am fortunate enough to live in another state, but I felt it was my duty as a citizen of this country to alert you to possible errors in judgement.

Thank you for your time.

Pete Del Re
Chicago, IL

Allan Egolf - Idiotic Flag and Pledge Legislation

From: [REDACTED]
To: <aegolf@pahousegop.com>
Date: 11/18/2002 2:14 PM
Subject: Idiotic Flag and Pledge Legislation

Dear Rep. Egolf (and staff):

I was born, raised and attended college in Pennsylvania, and I love my home state. It is a state with great physical beauty, much history and many decent, honest and hard working people.

I am at once disappointed, disturbed and ashamed that you sponsored, and the Pennsylvania legislature passed your Pledge of Allegiance-Flag Salute legislation. So much so, that I decided to write to you, even though I realize my letter will be just one of scores and will likely be ignored.

The first problem with your legislation is Constitutional. Although you may have little problem with forcing children to say an allegiance pledge which includes the words "under God" (and God clearly means a Christian god in the pledge), you need to remember that not all children worship your God and some don't worship any god. Atheists, Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and other religions have a right to be free from state imposed pledges which include swearing to your God. That you don't get this is evidence you really don't understand a basic principle of American life - religious freedom. People of other religions or none have the right to be free from being coerced by the state into pledging to your God every morning.

Second, your parental notification provision is un-Constitutional and imprudent. It may be hard for you to fathom, but by high school, intelligent, critical thinking young people sometimes begin to develop their own independent ideas on religion, rather than simply mindlessly parroting their parents' religious principles. Where the independent critical reasoning of students lead them to believe saying the pledge is wrong they should have that right, a right of conscience, without the school tattling to their parents. Your plan basically uses state and parental coercion to force dissident school children into conformity. It is un-Christian to use the sword (of the state) to coerce people into so-called "right" religious behavior. Jesus taught that the Word must be spread through love and discussion and exemplary behavior - not by the use of the state's coercive power.

Perhaps the worst feature of your legislation is its pandering to the herd. Putting a flag up, singing the national anthem, saying the pledge, are all the easiest and cheapest forms of patriotism. Most Americans don't vote, most have very little civic concern (ever see the stats on how little Americans read about politics and world affairs?), most never participate in public service, and most object to paying their fair share of taxes. In a country which is increasingly ever more selfish, and privatistic, these external and superficial symbols of patriotism allow people to feel they are being patriotic while they are really going little if anything civic, public and patriotic in the real sense. It is easy to stick a flag on your porch or to mouth the National Anthem at a game or to mumble to pledge in school - it is harder to actually be patriotic. So far from making Americans more patriotic, these superficialities have the reverse effect, they allow selfish, me-oriented Americans to feel like they are off the hook as far as public activity and spirit is concerned.

If you want children to become adults who actually participate in public life, who read a little so that they are better citizens, who involve themselves in public events, then you should sponsor legislation to teach children real lessons and real choice related to public life. We don't need flags and pledges - we need public servants, we need volunteerism, we need to read more and know more, we need to not be so greedy and selfish, we need to think about community and do things for community. And teaching children that these public choices are noble and good and worthwhile would do much more to build a good country than empty words, said like a ritual, every morning because are coerced into doing so by the Pennsylvania state assembly. (Even you have to realize that children recite that pledge by rote after a few years and that the words are dead and lifeless after that point.)

If you want a good country, then educate students in substantive patriotism - putting them above me, parting with a

little of my money to provide public good, volunteering my time to help the community, state or country, choosing jobs and careers that help the many and the public not just me or some company, taking time to read and inform yourself so you can participate in an enlightened and empowered way. Teach students these things - don't cram a pledge down their throats so that they are mindlessly repeating empty, rote memorized words year after year.

You should know something about substantive and not mere empty patriotism. You served in the military. You taught. You did public service. In those ways, you actually did somethings which made your community and state and nation better.

That is what patriotism is about - doing things, giving time, giving energy, giving money or sacrificing money for the community, the state and the nation.

And now you are a public servant - and rather than examining your own life, which is testimony to real substantive patriotism, a patriotism of doing not merely "saying" - you turn you back on your real contribution and decide instead to pander and to cater to superficial, beat the drums, wave the flag empty patriotism. Rather than doing something - like proposing more monies for civic education or government internships or internships with charities -which would improve the real partiotic education of young people, you have stooped to put forward an empty headed, unconstitutional, coercive and imprudent piece of legislation that simply play to herd mentality and superficial patriotism.

I am ashamed for you, and ashamed for and of my home state.

Glenn Stephens, Ph.D., J.D.

House Approves Egolf's Bill Mandating Flag Display and Pledge Recital

HARRISBURG – The House today approved Rep. Allan Egolf's legislation that requires schools to display the United States flag in each classroom and offer the Pledge of Allegiance or the National Anthem on each school day.

“The flag, pledge and anthem remind us of our proud heritage,” Egolf (R-86) said. “We must do everything we can to help students understand the fundamental principles of our form of government.

“Since the terrorists attacks on America on Sept. 11, there has been a far greater appreciation for the values held in symbols such as the flag, the Pledge or Allegiance and the National Anthem.”

Currently, schools are required to display a United States flag on or near each public school building.

Individual schools are also required to display the United States flag, not less than three feet in length, within all school buildings under their control. There is no requirement in law for a United States flag in each classroom.

“The requirement of a daily recital of the Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem could enhance a student's sense of patriotism and possibly instill a greater sense of respect for their country and those men and women who fought to preserve our freedoms,” Egolf said.

Egolf said that under his bill, no person can be compelled to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem, provided that they have a written objection from the pupil's parent or guardian.

Egolf said he introduced the legislation in response to multiple complaints by the veteran community, which focused on the issue of fewer American flags in classrooms, and the dispensing with a daily Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag in the classrooms.

“I am concerned that school administrators could interpret current law to mean that a standard civics class could be sufficient in regard to requirements to teach allegiance to the flag, as opposed to reciting the pledge or singing the anthem,” Egolf said.

The State Veterans Commission and the Pennsylvania War Veterans Council support Egolf’s bill.

House Bill 592 passed by a vote of 200-1 and now goes to the Senate.

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Steve Dowell
Freelance Photographer

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MB 592

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P.O. Box 364

New Bloomfield, PA 17068

Phone (717) 582-7399

11/20/2001

To: Allan Egolf
from: Steve Dowell

NOV 26 2001

Dear Al,

Always...thanks for the monthly digest you send to me in the mail. A moment is wished to be taken here to thank you for flags returning to our class rooms. Sometimes, "tough love" is necessary. And as always remember...it's all about TAXES, TAXES, TAXES. With meaningful tax reform; getting rid of nuisance taxes and the "unrightous" taxes such as school taxes (I don't have children in school; therefore, I should not be forced to pay school taxes), everything else will fall into it's proper place. I can then afford health insurance for myself and also create a life of better self-reliance. Thanks for your time. And remember to pray for all our veterans and keep your eyes trained upon the Lord.

Best regards,

Steve

Shalom Christian Academy

126 Social Island Road
Chambersburg, PA 17201
717.375.2223
www.shalomca.com



NOV 5 2001

November 1, 2001

Honorable Representative Allen Egolf
House Box 202020
South Office Building, Room 401
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Dear Representative Egolf:

I am writing concerning House Bill 592 on Flags in Schools that would require all Pennsylvania schools to fly a flag, have a flag in each classroom, and lead students in a pledge of allegiance each day. On behalf of Shalom Christian Academy, I seek your assistance in searching for a way to exempt our school along with other private, Anabaptist-related schools from this pending legislation.

Shalom Christian Academy is an Anabaptist school with students from Mennonite, Brethren in Christ, German Baptist, Church of the Brethren, and Old Order River Brethren churches. Our Anabaptist constituency is deeply grateful to our government for allowing us to practice our faith without the need to violate our conscience based on scripture. We pray for our government and abide by the laws of our country.

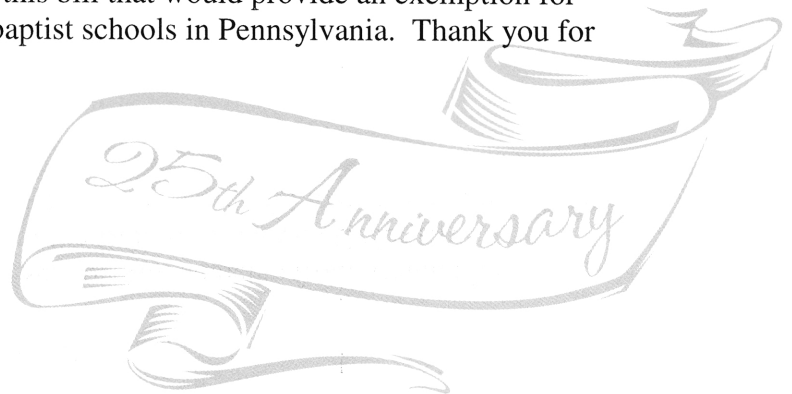
The proposed flag requirements would lead to a divisive conflict within our own school as well as within Pennsylvania. While desiring to obey the laws of our government, most of our constituency would view this as an infringement on religious liberty. Our forefathers came to this state because of the religious freedom offered here. At this time of unique challenge in our country, we all desire unity rather than a divisive spirit.

I respectfully urge you to find language for this bill that would provide an exemption for Shalom Christian Academy and other Anabaptist schools in Pennsylvania. Thank you for your kind attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Conrad Swartzentruber', written over a horizontal line.

Conrad Swartzentruber
Administrator



Mr. Speaker,

As a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I was approached by members of several of our state veterans organizations. They were very concerned that many of our public schools were no longer requiring the display of our American flag in classrooms nor the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag at the beginning of each school day as most of us remember doing as we were growing up. They asked if I would introduce legislation to correct this trend.

I had not been aware that there was a problem in this area so I wanted to find out for myself. I decided to ask some students in my local school districts if they started the school day with the Pledge to the flag.

The first young person I asked was a piano student of my wife. She said that on the first day of school her teacher asked the class how many wanted to say the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of school each day. Since no young student wants to be the first to

raise their hand no one did—so the teacher said they would not do the Pledge—and they didn't for the rest of the year.

We found that several other schools in Central Pennsylvania do not require daily Pledge or National Anthem at the beginning of the school day.

I agree with our veterans that by starting each day with the Pledge of Allegiance or the singing of the National Anthem reminds us of the great freedoms that we enjoy in this Country and the sacrifices made by others for that freedom. We need to teach our young people about our flag and what it stands for.

From: [REDACTED] >
To: <trout@pahousegop.com>
Date: 9/24/01 9:55AM
Subject: Letter to Editor

Patriotism in Our Schools

I'm writing in response to the criticism that Representative Allan Egoft has received for introducing HB 592. This legislation would amend the public school code of 1949, that requires our schools to display one U.S. flag upon or near each public school building. His legislation would require one U.S. flag in each classroom.

Representative Egoft's bill would also offer the Pledge of Allegiance or the national anthem at the beginning of each school day. The critics have called this legislation forced patriotism. It has even been referred to as Nazism. This bill clearly states the following "no pupil may be compelled against the pupil's objection, approved in writing, by the pupil's parent or guardian, to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or to sing the national anthem."

I was personally appalled to read earlier this year in the Patriot News that Cumberland Valley High School students recite the pledge of allegiance only once a week. The students of Cumberland Valley and other school districts in Pennsylvania should have this opportunity each day of school.

As our country copes with the cowardly acts of terrorism on September 11th, there has been a new wave of patriotism and we have rallied to the symbols of our freedom. Our students and teachers should have these symbols available to them. They also should be instructed on the cost American men and women have paid for our precious freedom and the American way of life. Now is the time for this Legislation!

Tom McDole
Legislative Committee Chairman
Disabled American Veterans
Department of Pennsylvania

file ✓

LEGISLATIVE POSITION



OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENTAL
AND MEMBER RELATIONS

For Further Information, Contact:

Thomas J. Gentzel, Assistant Executive Director for Governmental and Member Relations
Timothy M. Allwein, Director of Legislative Services

Pennsylvania School Boards Association • 774 Limekiln Road • New Cumberland, PA 17070-2398 • (717) 774-2331 • FAX (717) 774-0718

TO: House Veterans and Emergency Affairs Committee
SUBJECT: Position Paper – House Bill 592 P.N. 649
DATE: June 18, 2001

HOUSE BILL 592

House Bill 592 amends the School Code to set forth provisions for the display of the United States flag. Specifically, the legislation requires that a United States flag be displayed in every classroom in every school and that either the Pledge of Allegiance or the national anthem be offered at the commencement of each school day for grades 1-12. Additionally, no student would be required to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, so long as such objections are approved in writing by the student's parents.

While the association feels the intent of this legislation is noble and patriotic, current provisions of the School Code already address this issue. Presently, schools are required to conduct either appropriate daily instruction or ceremonies affirming allegiance to the flag, or dedicate one full period a week to such activities. Therefore, the General Assembly can be assured that schools have an adequate number of United States flags displayed and that students are currently exposed to the activities outlined in this legislation.

From: Tom Pyne
To: Allan Egolf
Date: Mon, Aug 20, 2001 9:19 AM
Subject: Flag/Pledge bill

At Mike Davies' initiative, we sent a satellite feed to all TV stations on your bill related to the US Flag, National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance today.

I have to tell you it resulted in an interesting phone call from an assignment editor at WBRE-TV in Scranton.

But he isn't just any assignment editor - his name is Ken Miller, a former state representative from North Carolina who sponsored a similar bill in their legislature in 1995. He says the measure, HB 65, was passed and is now law. He claims they got around the ACLU by having state veterans groups donate the flags. (Hard to believe that even the ACLU would oppose the flying of US flags in classrooms.)

Anyway, if you want to get any info about how they ran the bill in North Carolina, you can reach Ken Miller at home at 570-828-1991 or work (WBRE) at 1-800-358-9273.

CC: Mike Davies