The Honorable Edward J. Gearty  
President of the Senate  

Dear Sir:  

I am vetoing Senate File 550. This act, if allowed to become law, would have permitted candidates campaigning for a legislative or constitutional office to spend an increased amount of money on their elections.  

The focus of public policy should turn from the cost of a campaign to the sources of the money for a campaign.  

I have long been an advocate of reduced contribution limits. It is illogical to assume that candidates are tainted by the amount they spend on their campaigns. Rather, the potential for creating undue influence is derived from the amount any one individual or group can contribute to a candidate.  

Merely increasing spending limits is not the solution to ensure that elections will be fair and free from abuse. It's my belief that S. F. No. 550 has the potential of repressing rather than improving our political process.  

Campaign financing is an important facet of Minnesota's Ethics in Government Act. It is an area of law which should be addressed in toto rather than piecemeal. By simply raising expenditure limits the Legislature has failed to consider other changes which have been recently suggested by the Ethical Practices Board. This Board is given the statutory authority to indicate apparent abuses and offer legislative recommendations regarding this Act.  

For seven months the Board undertook an extensive analysis of public financing of election campaigns. Their study focused on how well Minnesota's program has met the goals of the public financing system which was adopted in 1974.  

Their report, transmitted to the Legislature in January, recommended the elimination of expenditure limits. The bipartisan Board concluded:  

a. Spending limits do not hold down the costs of campaigns;
b. Spending limits inhibit a challenger's ability to obtain name recognition and identity which any incumbent inherently has already acquired;

c. Current emphasis on spending limits is misdirected. Rather, public policy should be to control the impact of campaign money by a reduction in contribution limits.

I find it regrettable that the Legislature not only acted contrary to the Board's conclusions, but more disturbing, failed to even consider them before enacting this bill.

It is quite apparent that the provision of S. F. No. 550 are politically motivated. This act has been placed on my desk without careful study or legislative deliberation. This law would not benefit the people of this State.

I am encouraged that the Senate Elections Committee has adopted several of the recommendations of the Ethical Practices Board. I urge that they all be adopted. The Board's recommendations which received unanimous approval included:

a. Increase the political checkoff to $2.00 (single) and $4.00 (joint);

b. Eliminate the party designated checkoff;

c. Substitute a matching fund system for the current grant system of public financing;

d. Eliminate campaign expenditure limits;

e. Reduce contribution limits.

For the reasons set forth in this message, and with the hope that the Board's recommendations be adopted, I cannot allow S. F. No. 550 to become law. I am, therefore, returning it to you unsigned.

Sincerely,

ALBERT H. QUIE
Governor

Osthoff moved that S. F. No. 550 be now reconsidered and repassed, the objections of the Governor notwithstanding, pursuant to Article IV, Section 23, of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota.

Kempe was excused from 4:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
The question was taken on the motion of Osthoff to reconsider and repass S. F. No. 550, the objections of the Governor notwithstanding, pursuant to Article IV, Section 23, of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota and the roll was called viva voce. There were 68 yeas and 65 nays as follows:

Those who voted in the affirmative were:

Adams           Corbib
Anderson, B.    Eken
Anderson, G.    Elliff
Anderson, I.    Ellingson
Battaglia       Farley
Begich          Fultz
Berglin         Pudro
Berkelman       Greenfield
Brinkman        Hokanson
Byrne           Jacobs
Carlson, L.     Jaros
Cassarly        Johnson, C.
Clark           Jude
Clawson         Kahn

Those who voted in the negative were:

Aasness         Erickson
Ainley          Esau
Albrecht        Evans
Anderson, D.    East
Anderson, R.    Fjoslien
Biersdorf       Forsythe
Blatz           Friedrich
Carlson, D.     Halberg
Crandaal        Haukoos
Dean            Heap
Dempsey         Heinitz
Dun Onden       Hoberg
Drew            Jennings

Not having received the required two-thirds vote the bill was not repassed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

Anderson, R., was excused from 5:10 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

H. F. No. 378 was reported to the House.

Otis moved to amend H. F. No. 378, as follows:

Amend the title as follows:

Page 1, line 5, delete “legislative approval;”

The motion prevailed and the amendment was adopted.