

March 31, 1998

The Honorable Allan H. Spear  
President of the Senate

Dear President Spear:

I have vetoed and am returning Chapter 347, Senate File Number 2221, a bill which would extend Ramsey County's open absentee ballot pilot program.

Notwithstanding the concerns raised by many in the legislature about the ramifications of the open absentee ballot pilot program, I question the need for its continuation. This project has been in existence since 1991. At what point do we bring a pilot project to an end? What information, other than what has already been gathered, does the county hope to obtain? And what does the county intend to do when the project expires in two years? We know what the benefits and drawbacks of this program are -- it's time to end it and take up the larger debate of applying it to all citizens of the state.

I again feel obligated to remind the legislature that significant changes to election laws are too important to be entirely one-sided and lacking in bipartisanship. I cannot support any changes to our election laws when only a handful of Republican members in the House, and relatively few in the Senate, supported the bill. This position is consistent with my communications to the legislature over the last year.

Warmest regards,  
Arne H. Carlson, Governor