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MINNESOTA
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**STADIUM PROPOSAL THAT ALSO BENEFITS MINNESOTA'S MID AND
HIGH SCHOOL GOOD CITIZENSHIP CERTIFIED SCHOOLS AND
MINNESOTA TROOPERS, POLICE, FIRE FIGHTERS AND VETERANS
KILLED OR DISABLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY**

Governor Tim Pawlenty
Stadium Review Board
Minnesota State Capitol
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Pawlenty and Minnesota Stadium Review Board Members:

I thank each of you for the opportunity and privilege of making the proposal that can build and maintain Minnesota's professional sports stadiums without taxpayer assistance, that can benefit Minnesota law enforcement personnel and fire fighters and military veterans disabled or killed in the line of duty and that can assure that more Minnesota children annually pledge to become and remain good citizens for the benefit of their cultural, recreational and athletic programs.

PROPOSAL

The stadiums for the professional baseball and football teams (and the present upkeep and/or the eventual replacement for the Wild and Timberwolves venues) can be built/maintained without any taxpayer funds thereby better assuring those teams perpetual presence in Minnesota.

BENEFICIARIES OF THE "FREE" STADIUM FUNDING PROPOSAL

***DISABLED AMERICAN/MINNESOTA VETERANS TO INCLUDE THOSE
MINNESOTA LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL AND MINNESOTA FIRE
FIGHTERS DISABLED OR KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY***

WE HAVE TOO LONG IGNORED THOSE WHO PROTECT AND SERVE THROUGH SELF SACRIFICE

In addition to "free" stadiums, with my proposal we can also assure that disabled Minnesota veterans can increase their disability checks up from the \$672.00 social security disability payment and the \$672.00 monthly check from the military to somewhere approaching \$40,000.00 (or more) to compensate for their blood shed and residual diminished life so freely given to assure that each of us and our children and grandchildren could enjoy a better quality of life here in Minnesota.

In the process of defining the disabled American Veteran we should include in the class of potential claimants those Minnesota police, troopers and fire fighters disabled in the line of duty and/or their families who survive their loved one's death in the line of duty.

In this process, we can also become the first state to establish a perpetual fund for the families of Minnesota veterans killed in the line of duty.

BACKGROUND

When Disabled American Veteran Senator Bob Dole and Disabled Medal of Honor recipient and Hawaii Senator Daniel Inouye participated in granting Minnesota Indian representative Leonard Prescott the gaming licenses that now benefit so many Indian tribes, it appears that they should have included a reserve for a portion of the earnings for the current and future class of Disabled Veterans who have in their history from the freeing of the Indian Nation and the Colonies from the tyranny of the British to the most recent loss of limb and life displayed uniform self-sacrifice and grace under fire.

We must always remember that we have no American nation and not even any United States Constitution or the rights guaranteed thereunder without the victories that freed us and then protected us against leaders unwilling to first give us our freedom or then recognize our commitment for preserving the privileges of democracy.

It seems that we must both begin to remember and also better appreciate that at great personal costs, we won our freedom and our democracy on the battlefields not in any legislative forum.

Decedents of those Revolutionary veterans (and some American veterans who later had to fight against their native blood lines including Senator Inouye) have long acted, with grace and self-sacrifice - and assured our collective freedom from the tyranny of both Hitler and from the leaders of the previous misguided Japanese empire, and more recently from very cruel and evil despots.

It remains very doubtful if the American Indian nation could have banded together to alone defeat Hitler or alone crossed the Pacific to project the awesome power required to defeat Japan. Their present leaders may even be convinced that their nation owes the American veteran a tribute for those sacrifice.

Perhaps Indian tribal leaders, when now faced with a veteran's gaming proposal will admit their nation's inability to alone preserve America during its great times of need and consent to the issuance of just one veterans' gaming license in Minnesota.

Perhaps it appears time that we here in Minnesota can correct the insensitivity to the plight of the Minnesota disabled veteran (to include disabled troopers, police and fire fighters and the families of those so killed in the line of duty) as we begin to memorialize the efforts of our always permanently Disabled Minnesota Veterans.

We should begin to both better remember them and also reward them for their self-sacrificing service and loss of limb and abilities rather than to continue to just benefit the Native American Indian through Minnesota gambling profits.

It should be appreciated that there would be no Minnesota gambling earnings to ever share and now distribute without the loss of blood, treasure, and life of the Minnesota veterans.

Too many of them now remain forgotten if not neglected as they collect only \$1,352.00 a month while the members of the Prior Lake based Indian tribes - reportedly - individually receive more than \$1,000,000 a year.

To any longer permit just one disabled veteran to live in continued squalor while bed ridden and with bed sores pain as many of those who never served America at all continue to grow in a prosperity permitting indulgences perhaps never envisioned by Senator Dole and Inouye is a social issue easily addressed through this stadium funding proposal that also greatly benefits all children of Minnesota who first pledge to and then display good citizenship.

It is appreciated that this annual fund payment of some per claimant figure perhaps approaching \$30,000.00 a year for Disabled Minnesota veterans - to include Minnesota law enforcement and fire fighter personnel - will never, ever approach the \$1,000,000.00 or more per year that the Mystic Lake tribe members reportedly currently enjoy per tribal unit in great part as a result of their bloodline.

*GOOD CITIZENSHIP CERTIFIED MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC,
CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS*

The second group to benefit from the stadium funding proposal would include "good citizenship" certified middle and high school athletic, cultural and recreational programs in each community in Minnesota.

Access fees should no longer determine whether any child gets to participate in the lasting recreational, cultural and athletic programs that engender both leadership and social interaction, and that also build the corp of our state's youth who will inherit Minnesota and perhaps even influence our nation.

Perhaps some form of certification and entitlement to the annual benefits can be established such that only schools that can both reach the level of a "certified good citizenship school" and that have no shootings and killings in the prior two years may participate in the disbursement of each year's funds.

The residual MetroDome lease could be paid from the funds devoted to youth and the MetroDome could be more devoted to youth activities attended by parents.

It is envisioned that with the legislative direction, the owner's commitment, and the players participation that we can build a better program for enrichment of our youth similar to the involvement that Jim and Bill Brown ably provided me in my formulative years in Champaign-Urbana.

THE MINNESOTA TWINS, VIKINGS, WILD, AND TIMBERWOLVES

The third group to benefit from the stadium funding and enrichment proposal is composed of the professional teams in need of a stadium in Minnesota to also include the already Minnesota venued Wild and Timberwolves.

Once the stadiums are built then some portion of the funding can remain in place for maintenance and a "reserve" for improvements, modernization through time, and eventual replacement.

The fund, once in place, should assure a stream of payments. So, as a partial tribute to our veterans we should assure that all Minnesota professional sports venues would perpetually include in their name the word "veteran stadium, park, or arena" in partial recognition of our great American athletes who never got to step on the playing field due to their ultimate self-sacrifice.

Perhaps we will then also begin to remember that their bloodlines were then stopped far short of their dreams and perhaps they died without producing and raising the self-sacrificing children and grandchildren who might have better changed our teams and games.

It might also appear to the owners and the players that when the professional sports venues are both modern and subsidized (and perhaps with better lease payments) then the issue of whether any professional team will ever leave Minnesota perhaps becomes moot.

RECOMMENDATION

The state of Minnesota should authorize the issuance of a Veterans' Casino license for the Twin Cities Northern tier Metropolitan area (perhaps between Mystic Lake and Grand Casino Mille Lacs and Hinkley) that permits some established percentage of the profits to be first disbursed to the Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota (to include disabled troopers, police and fire fighters and the survivors of those killed in the line of duty), then to the "good citizenship certified" Middle and High School Good Citizen Fund, and then to the building and support of the professional venues required to assured continued presence in Minnesota of the Twins, the Vikings, the Wild, and the Timberwolves.

Each stadium complex should be named/renamed to include the "Target", "Excell" Twins, and Vikings Veterans' Stadium, respectively.

SALARY CAP AND UNEQUAL TAXES

Most of you should be aware that Florida for example has a 8% or more advantage than Minnesota and other states since Florida athletes pay no state income tax and therefore they keep more of their salaries.

Although this does not fully explain why the MLB baseball and NFL football trophies both reside in Florida this year. Just the simple math does explain that there is an uneven playing field where athletes can receive a 8% pay benefit simply by where they live.

What would happen if there were a "uniform state tax" collected from all professional athletes instead of the present method of irregular state taxing? That "uniform state tax" could then be distributed back to the states (and ear marked for youth and stadium enrichment programs) according to the number of professional sports personnel in that state times the amount of the total professional sports salaries involved in that state bears to the total of the professional sports taxes collected by all states under the "uniform state tax" assessment.

The second playing field disadvantage appears through the salary cap which I am told is set at a percentage of the gross revenues generated by the team. It thus appears to me that without the larger stadium we will have a reduced cap vis a vis the larger markets and this would perhaps lead to concerns of perpetual quality of team and presence in Minnesota issues rather than just letting kids see us field competitive teams.

CONCLUSION

The stadium funding bill I ask you to consider does not take one cent of taxpayer's funds and merely shifts the entertainment decision of so many Minnesotan's from funding the Indian tribal members alone to funding disabled Minnesota veterans (to include troopers, police and fire fighters killed and disabled in the line of duty) and the children of good citizenship of Minnesota.

It would appear that the "entertainment fund" percentages devoted to each group of claimants would shift according to need while always assuring that the appropriate portion of the funds would go to assuring that Minnesota stadiums are more competitive with the other cities and teams in the league.

In the process of beginning to recognize the disabled veterans and our killed and disabled troopers and police and fire fighters while we also better grow children of good citizenship we may also help our Minnesota professional team members to display a more realistic and sacred view of both Minnesota and America as we coax them to better display the virtues of some self-sacrifice.

Sincerely, Don Fuller, Colonel USMC (Ret).

