



Minnesota Commanders Task Force

March 16, 2010

Dear Legislators,

We write to you in regards to recent media stories about how “Support Our Troops” license plate funds were used to partially fund the work of a former Governor’s Office employee that worked on faith and community based outreach efforts. As leaders of nine of Minnesota’s congressionally-chartered veteran service organizations, we are keenly interested in how the state, through the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, helps serve the veterans that live in our state.

We are deeply troubled by the potential for long-term damage that will occur if the mission of the “Support Our Troops” plate is tarnished. If people believe that the funds are not being spent correctly, they will no longer purchase the plate, which will result in decreased revenues to the account. Decreased revenues means less money for Veteran Service Organizations, *outreach to underserved veterans*, and to transfers for the Gold Star license plates.

We firmly believe that the Department of Veterans Affairs did not misuse these funds. Hiring the part-time services of a person that is already connected to the groups the Department was trying to reach seems to be a much more efficient use of money than hiring a permanent, full-time employee. Further, it is our personal experience that this employee did indeed do the work requested, under the parameters for which the fund was created.

We value the hard work done by ALL legislators to support our veterans. Minnesota is one of the most veteran-friendly states in the nation and it is because of the work that has been done at the Capitol over the last several years. That being said, we urge everyone involved in this issue to take a step back, and consider what damage is being done to a vital program – and more importantly to the veterans and their family members who are served by it.

Sincerely,

Maynard Kaderlik, Commander
Vietnam Veterans of America

Al Holtan, DAV, Chair
Commanders Task Force

Irving Rosenblum, Commander
Jewish War Veterans

Al Davis, Commander
American Legion

Bernie Thompson, Commander
Marine Corps League

David Claypool, Commander
American Ex-POWs

Gary W. Kinser, Commander
Military Order of the Purple Heart

Michael J. Cook, Commander
AMVETS

Don Nix, Commander
Veterans of Foreign Wars

