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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8010

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State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1993 Regular Session

By Senators Franklin, Winsley, Skratek, Prentice, McAuliffe, Sheldon, Fraser, Pelz, Quigley, Wojahn, Talmadge, Hargrove and Niemi

Read first time 02/04/93. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

1 TO THE HONORABLE BILL CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND  
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
7 represent and petition as follows:

8 WHEREAS, The Hatch Act of 1939 vastly prohibits the political  
9 rights and activities of Federal civilian and postal employees in any  
10 endeavor beyond voting, privately expressing opinions about candidates  
11 and issues, or contributing money to political organizations; and

12 WHEREAS, Federal civilian and postal workers are, first and  
13 foremost, citizens of the United States, with interests and experiences  
14 as diverse as the nation and should be allowed to more fully  
15 participate in the democratic process; and

16 WHEREAS, The current language of the Hatch Act is so vague and  
17 complex as to create a chilling effect on the activities of many  
18 federal employees who often do not participate in currently permissible  
19 activities out of confusion and concern for their job security; and

20 WHEREAS, The Commission on Political Activity of Government  
21 Personnel which was created by Congress and charged with the task of

1 extensively studying the question of Hatch Act reform concluded in 1968  
2 that the Act was confusing, ambiguous, restrictive, and negative in  
3 character; and

4 WHEREAS, Federal civilian and postal employees deserve to and  
5 should be permitted to participate voluntarily, as private citizens, to  
6 the fullest extent possible in the political processes of the nation;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The necessity for the protection of such employees and the  
9 general citizenry from improper political solicitations or coercion has  
10 decreased substantially in the years since the implementation of the  
11 Hatch Act; and

12 WHEREAS, The merit system for employee advancement has become so  
13 firmly entrenched in the American Civil Service system that the  
14 existing Hatch Act is no longer required to protect employees from  
15 improper pressure from their superiors; and

16 WHEREAS, Federal civilian and postal employees possess unparalleled  
17 knowledge and understanding of the Government and its administration  
18 which would add immensely to public policy debate if such employees  
19 were freed to become more politically active;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the United  
21 States Congress and President Bill Clinton amend The Hatch Act, as  
22 codified in Title 5, United States Code, to provide for Federal  
23 civilian and postal employees to participate voluntarily as private  
24 citizens in the political processes of the nation and to protect such  
25 employees from improper political solicitation or coercion only to the  
26 extent truly necessary.

27 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
28 transmitted to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United  
29 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the  
30 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
31 Washington.

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