



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Dear Colleagues,

I regret that I'm not with you today to vote on HB 3014. I agreed to forward this measure from Committee but do not want to leave the House with a mistaken impression of my position. While it would be expedient to simply be listed as "excused" I thought it important to share with you my opposition and concerns.

Each morning on the floor of the House, I place my hand over my heart and pledge allegiance to our flag and our Republic. I do so with pride and with such gratitude that sometimes thinking about it brings tears to my eyes.

So why then would I oppose this bill?

To be clear:

- I support placing flags in all classrooms
- I support education about our democracy, our government and our freedoms
- I would support this measure if it called for a pledge limited to students old enough to comprehend it
- I do not support requiring our youngest citizens to make a daily loyalty oath and mouthing words they may not yet understand

The most important section of this measure allows students the option of a respectful silence. **Colleagues, how much intellectual courage do we require of our seven year-olds??**

If you honestly believe that students who demur will not be isolated, intimidated, mocked or bullied by their classmates, then please support this measure. But if you believe as I do that some children will be hurt by this requirement, then I ask you to oppose it.

I have some experience with these choices. I made one over 50 years ago, and I still remember like it was yesterday. I know the consequences of standing aside in respectful silence.

I would be voting no on behalf of our youngest citizens, not yet qualified to make a meaningful pledge or difficult decisions. It is not an easy vote and I'm sure there will be consequences. But I didn't come here to take easy votes.

I believe that when you require statements of patriotism, you demean that patriotism. Our freedoms should be celebrated and not compelled.

If we honestly believe in the principles of "liberty and justice for all", then let's celebrate those values, right here, right now.

Sincerely,


Representative David Gomberg
House District 10

David Gomberg
**From the Desk
of Representative
Gomberg.
HB 3014**

