

June 14, 1994

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

I am enthusiastically writing to you and my U.S. Senators, Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, to share with you my discovery that I have found a key (G major) in which most people can comfortably sing our national anthem! For a hundred and eighty years, generations of patriotic Americans have consistently experienced vocal anguish trying to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Changing the key in which it is traditionally sung could easily bring moments of enhanced national exuberance and pride to at least 90% of our population who are now otherwise denied that experience.

Most of us get occasional goose bumps *hearing* a stirring rendition of our national anthem being played at significant events either here or abroad. Even though there may remain some debate as to its choice, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is firmly implanted in our national psyche. As John Philip Sousa said on April 15, 1930, "The only possible chance that we might have a new National Anthem would be when the eyes of all America are directed toward some national cause, and another genius captures the moment in a thrilling song of patriotism. Until that time, I do not believe the veneration of Francis Scott Key's anthem will be displaced." Now, most of us can get involved in *singing* it as well!

For the last seven years, I have been conducting a weekly "Community Sing" sponsored by the City of Solana Beach. As a physician, psychiatrist, and pianist, I have long recognized the often forgotten potential that group singing has for the expression of a myriad of positive feelings, including the patriotism I inherited from my father. Since changing the key to "The Star-Spangled Banner," participants at my sing-along have regularly enjoyed the experience of truly "getting into" our national anthem. I have had the same success at my Rotary Club, at two retirement homes, and at two local schools.

Since it eventually took an Act of Congress and a Presidential signature to adopt our national anthem on March 3, 1931, would the same be required to change the key in which it is officially written and performed? If so, how can I expediently initiate the process? (At last, a nagging and chronic national problem that might easily be resolved!)

You have my respect, admiration, and appreciation for all that you are doing and trying to do for our country.

Sincerely,

Edward A. Siegel, M.D.

Enclosures: 1) My new arrangement of "The Star Spangled Banner"
2) Copy of original bill establishing our national anthem
3) Copy of an article from the San Diego Tribune of April 19, 1991