

WISCONSIN STATE
LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE
HEARING RECORDS

1995-96

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on
Veterans and
Military Affairs
(AC-VMA)

Sample:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01a
- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01b
- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt02

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

➤ **

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ **

➤ Hearing Records ... HR

➤ **95hr_ab0179_AC-VMA_pt01c**

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

October 29, 1995

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY GEORGE J. GUMM

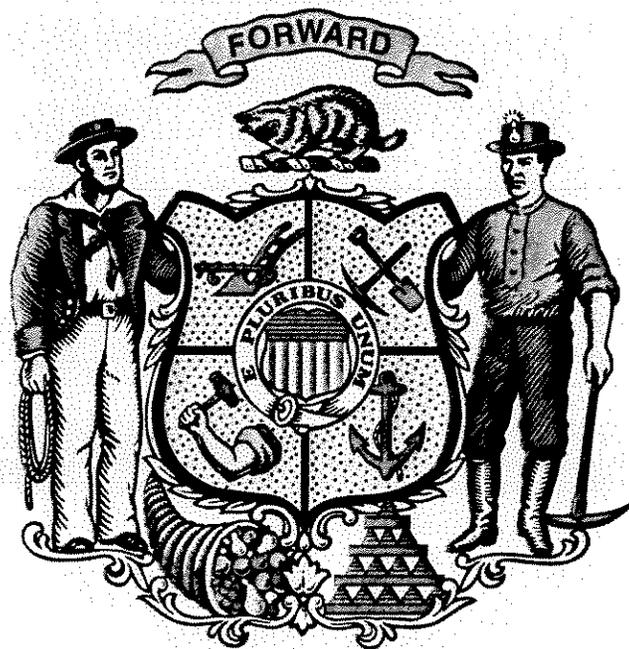
Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is George J. Gumm and I am a member in good standing of the Washington County Veterans Service Commission. I have been an American Legion member for 50 years and I recently served on the Executive Board of the State of Wisconsin's Veterans Commission for 3 years.

In the interest of assisting veterans in need on the county level in the best manner and also maintaining good government procedure, I feel that Representative Zukowski's bill, AB 179, is sound public policy. I urge the Committee to consider the merits of his proposal. AB 179 works for Veterans by ensuring that those in need are afforded a system which uses local control to dispense aid.

AB 179 is a fair, reasonable proposal which returns power back to the Veterans Service Commissions in all of the counties affected which was the legislative intent originally. This measure also returns all CVSO's to their intended roll of being advocates for the veteran rather than an adjudicator which lacks expertise and experience.

I respectfully urge you to pass AB 179 out of committee in order to begin the process of returning power to those who are the true and intended experts regarding the important work of distributing aid to needy veterans. Let us not forget that our first and foremost concern should be for veterans. Representative Zukowski had that concern in mind when he proposed this measure. This proposal empowers veterans and gives them the piece of mind they so justly deserve.

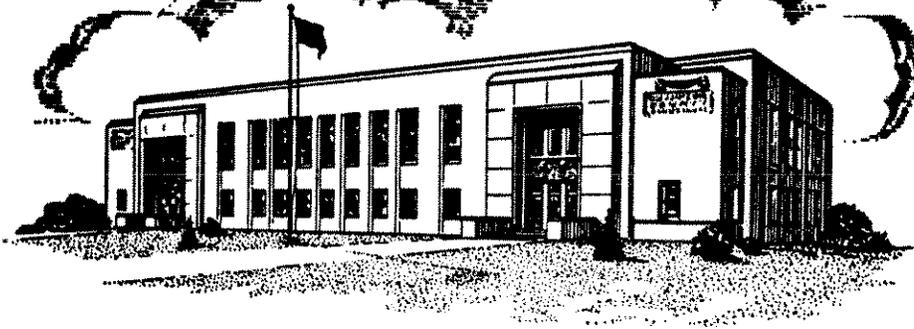
Thank you very much for considering my testimony before your committee this morning.



MYRON S. OLSON, CVSO

COUNTY OF CHIPPEWA

CAROLE F. BRAZEAU, SECY



OCT 31 1995

COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE
711 NORTH BRIDGE STREET
CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI 54729
1-715-726-7990

October 30, 1995

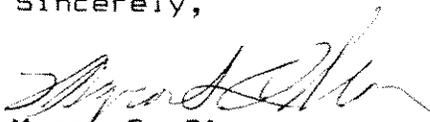
Honorable Robert K. Zukowski
P. O. Box 8953
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708-8953

Dear Representative Zukowski:

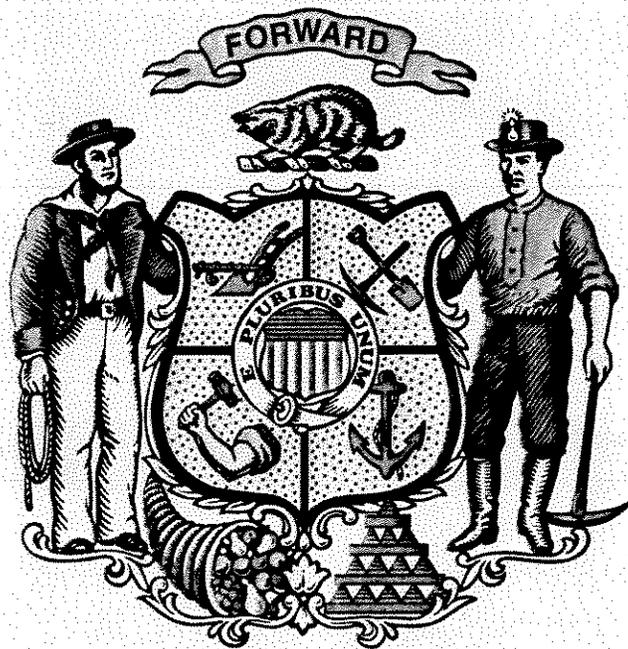
I would like you to use this letter as my written testimony in favor of Assembly Bill 179. As the Chippewa County Veterans Service Officer I can tell you our county works now very much in the manor that Assembly Bill 179 would require all counties to function. This process seems to give the veterans of Chippewa County the best possible access to benefits for which they are entitled.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,


Myron S. Olson,
County Veterans
Service Officer

MSO/cb



Robert P. Reil
Clark County Veterans Service Officer
Court House Suite 304 - Box 125
Neillsville, Wisconsin 54456

Hours: Mon - Fri
8:00 - 12:00
1:00 - 5:00
Except Holidays

Phone: 715-743-5160

In Reply Refer to:

October 30, 1995

Re: Assembly Bill 179

To: Whom It May Concern

Under current law the County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) shall advise persons living in the service officer's county who served in the US armed forces regarding any benefits to which they may be entitled or any complaint or problem arising out of such service and render to them and their dependents all possible assistance.

In other words, we as CVSO's are expected to be advocates for veterans and their families whether it may be a claim against the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) or the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). As advocates we realize we DO NOT ADJUDICATE claims but render assistance in the best way we can so that our veteran's claim might be adjudicated favorably. Under no circumstances do we attempt to advise our veterans just how we think their claim might be adjudicated by the USDVA or the WDVA. We DON'T KNOW just how a claim will be adjudicated as we are the ADVOCATES and USDVA and WDVA are the experts in their field and therefore, they are the ADJUDICATORS.

It is for this very same reason that I feel AB 179 should be passed. The CVSO has the expertise to investigate and advise but the CVSO DOES NOT have the expertise to be an adjudicator - it is just not part of the everyday duties of a CVSO. Therefore, it seems most logical that a three member Veterans Service Commission (VSC) should be in place to make such decisions and to be most knowledgeable, therefore, to make up a budget for the funds required for commission grants.

The County Veterans Service Commission with the County Veterans Service Officer serving as investigator and secretary for the commission has worked successfully for many, many years. Wisconsin veterans have been well served for many years by this arrangement. To expect the CVSO to switch roles from advocate, which is the primary function, to adjudicator, which is not the role of the CVSO; should not be expected.

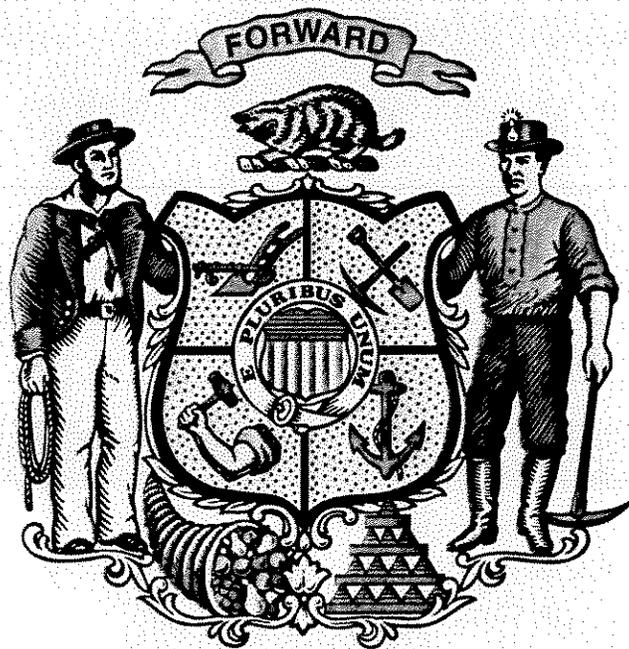
AB 179, I believe, is the fairest to the Wisconsin veteran. By having the CVSO act in the customary role of advocate and having someone else (the VSC) serve as the adjudicator; the veteran does not have to concern himself as much with the possibility of a bias decision. I strongly believe that three members of a commission making a decision on their knowledge plus the input of an investigation by the CVSO makes for a more unbiased decision than one made by only one individual.

AB 179 gives the power back to the Veterans Service Commissions in all the counties and returns all CVSO's to having the role of being strictly an advocate for the veteran and not that of an adjudicator where he has no expertise.

Thank you,



Robert P. Reil, Clark County Veterans Service Officer



DAVID W. THOMAS
Service Officer

1488
(715) 748-~~9494~~
Ext. 199

TAYLOR COUNTY
VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

224 SOUTH SECOND STREET (140)

MEDFORD, WISCONSIN 54451-1899

Oct. 31, 1995

TO: THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY VETERANS & MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

RE: ASSEMBLY BILL 179

POSITION: IN SUPPORT OF ASSEMBLY BILL 179

I believe that it is important to restore the power and authority to grant assistance to needy veterans to the Veterans Service Commissions in counties with a County Executive or County Administrator for several reasons.

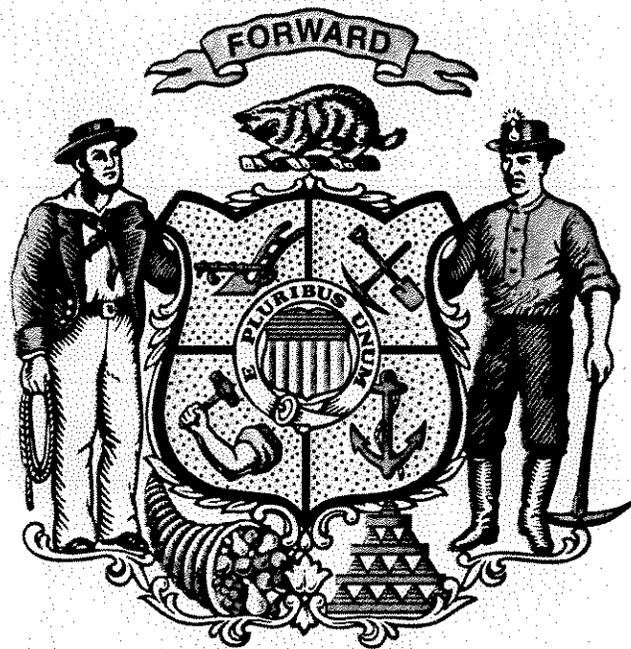
- 1) There can be a negative aspect to having this authority rest with the CVSO. The applicant for assistance is often a veteran with whom the CVSO has worked with in the past. This leaves open the possibility of charges of bias, or personality conflict, etc. in the event of a denial of assistance.
- 2) Empowering a 3 veteran panel, the Veterans Service Commission, provides for a more diverse and at times, possibly a more objective consideration of the application for assistance.
- 3) By restoring valid authority to the Veterans Service Commission in these counties, active participation within the veterans community is increased. This is important in large counties which are perceived to be leadership counties.
- 4) An active and involved Commission provides an additional source of input to the County Board relative to the veteran's needs within the county.
- 5) With passage of this bill, once again veterans are shown that they have a special status due to their service to this country, by the provision of a special means to meet their urgent needs. This recognition is important.
- 6) Restoring the authority to grant assistance to these commissions restores and demonstrates the Veterans helping Veterans concept, and diminishes similarities of welfare application processes.
- 7) Passage of this legislation provides for additional citizen authority and accountability for the expenditure of direct county tax dollars, and thereby increases participation in local government in these large counties where budgets are administered by County paid Department Heads often without a lot of public awareness.

I believe that this is a good bill with many very positive aspects and minimal negative aspects. The overall fiscal impact to the counties is really negligible when considering the importance and positiveness of the duties of the Veterans Service Commissions. Thank you.

Sincerely,



David W. Thomas, CVSO
Taylor County.



From: John F Bird
4016 Forshaug Rd
Black Earth WI 53515
Member Dane County Veterans Service Commission
Vice President Wisconsin State Association of County Veterans Service Commissions

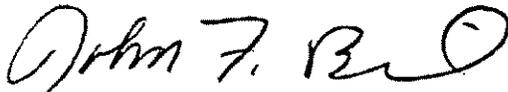
Dear Chairman Musser and Committee Members

I am sorry that I cannot appear in person to offer my support for Assembly Bill 179.

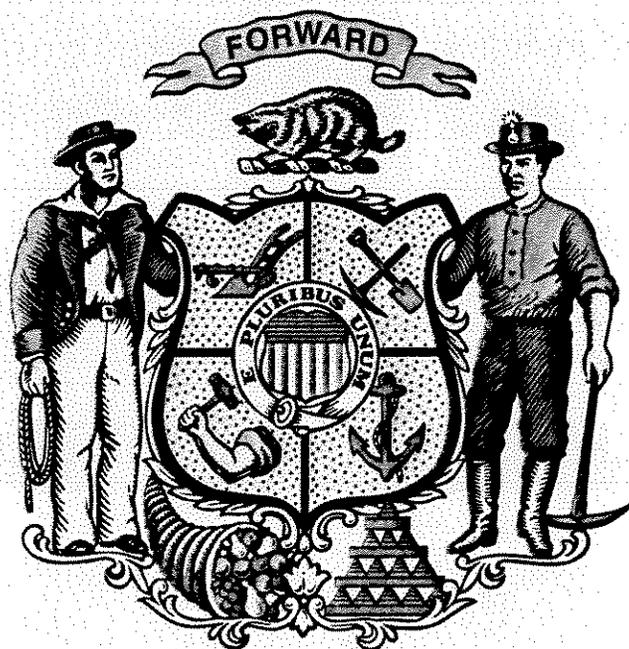
I would like to state my strong support for Assembly Bill 179 and State Representative Zukowski's testimony.

As a member of Dane Counties Veterans Service Commission I can tell you that our commission functions in much the same manor that Assembly Bill 179 requires it will be very useful to have the law clearly defined in case a new feels different.

Thank you



John F Bird



Fax

BUFFALO COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE,
COURTHOUSE
PO BOX 492
ALMA WI 54610
OFFICE 608-685-6219 FAX 608-685-6213

FAX COVER SHEET

STATE ASSEMBLY VETERANS &
TO: MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE DATE: OCTOBER 31, 1995

ADDRESS: % ROBERT ZUKOWSKI, PO BOX 8953

CITY: MADISON STATE WI ZIP: 53708-8953

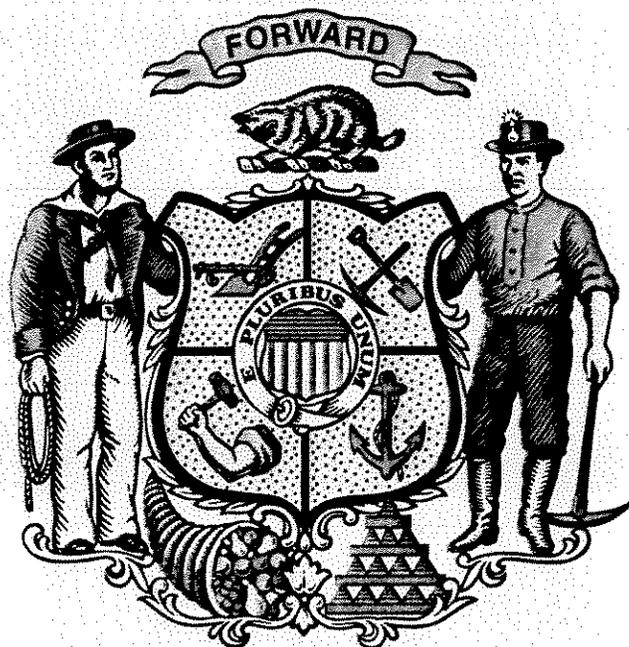
FAX #: (608) 267-0790 TOTAL PAGES 1

SUBJECT: ASSEMBLY BILL 179

MESSAGE: I urge the members of the State Assembly Veterans
and the Military affairs Committee to support Assembly
Bill 179. In Buffalo County current law allows the
county administrator to decide who receives aid and
how much. I feel that this should be done by a
Veterans Service Commission that is made up over
local veterans. To have a non-veteran, county employee
in control of these funds is not in keeping with the
spirit of this law which was intended to provide aid
to needy veterans.


Signed: ROBERT L. BLOSS

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER



VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICE

BAYFIELD COUNTY
COURTHOUSE ANNEX
P.O. BOX 367

WASHBURN, WISCONSIN 54891

THOMAS E. STAUFFER
SERVICE OFFICER

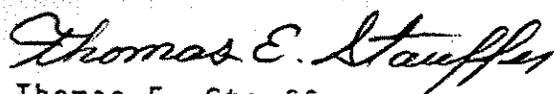
TELEPHONE
715/373-6137

November, 1, 1995

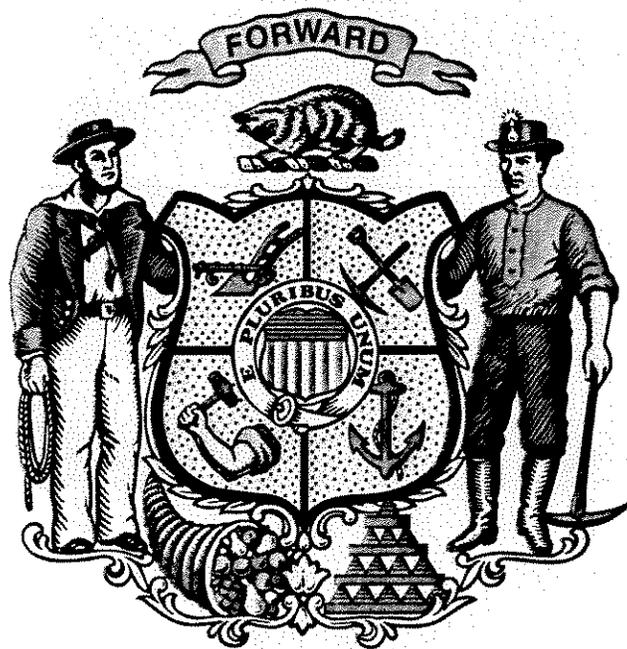
TO: Wisconsin State Assembly
RE: 1995 Assembly Bill # 179
From: Thomas E. Stauffer
Bayfield County
Veterans Service Officer

I am writing to voice my support for AB 179. I believe this Bill puts the duties and responsibilities of The Veterans Service Commission back in their own hands, and allows the original intent of the establishment of the Veterans Service Commission, to be better served.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Stauffer
Bayfield County
Veterans Service Officer





Robert K.
ZUKOWSKI

Support

Co-CHAIR: JOINT SURVEY COMMITTEE ON TAX EXEMPTIONS

VICE-CHAIR: Veteran and Military Affairs Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBER: Agriculture; Highways & Transportation; Health

69TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

TESTIMONY BY:
STATE REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT K. ZUKOWSKI

ASSEMBLY BILL 179
COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER
COMMISSION INITIATIVE

*Now 1st
1995*

GOOD MORNING CHAIRMAN MUSSER, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS. I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF ASSEMBLY BILL 179 TODAY.

I AUTHORED AND INTRODUCED ASSEMBLY BILL 179 AT THE REQUEST OF THE WISCONSIN STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSIONS.

WHEN HOME RULE WENT INTO EFFECT IN CERTAIN COUNTIES, IT WAS NEVER INTENDED TO IMPACT COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSIONS. HOWEVER THE WAY THE LAW WAS DRAFTED, COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSIONS WERE AUTOMATICALLY INCLUDED.

WHAT ASSEMBLY BILL 179 DOES IS TO RETURN THE AUTHORITY TO DISPENSE AID TO NEEDY VETERANS BACK TO THE 3-PERSON COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE COMMISSION IN COUNTIES WHERE THERE IS AN ADMINISTRATOR OR EXECUTIVE. UNDER CURRENT LAW, THIS AUTHORITY IS GIVEN TO THE VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER AND THE 3 PERSON COMMISSION ACTS ONLY AS HIS OR HER AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE.

Office: P.O. Box 8953, State Capitol • Madison, WI 53708-8953 • (608) 267-0280

Home: W9884 County Road MM • Thorp, WI 54771 • (715) 669-3250

Toll-Free Legislative Hotline: 1 (800) 362-9472

ZUKOWSKI TESTIMONY
NOVEMBER 1, 1995
PAGE 2

IN ADDITION, IF A NEW COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER IS APPOINTED AND THIS PERSON DOES NOT KNOW THE PEOPLE OR THE COUNTY, MANY MISTAKES CAN OCCUR. FOR INSTANCE, PEOPLE IN NEED OF AID CAN BE DENIED OR OTHERS CAN BE GIVEN HELP WHO AREN'T NECESSARILY IN NEED OR QUALIFIED TO RECEIVE AID.

IN COUNTIES NOT UNDER HOME RULE, THE 3-PERSON COMMITTEE FROM EACH COUNTY ELECTS THEIR OWN CHAIRPERSON AND DISTRIBUTES THE FUNDS IN THE MANNER WHICH BEST SUITS THAT COUNTY. THE COMMITTEE TAKES EACH CASE INTO CONSIDERATION AND VOTES OR ACTS ON EACH CASE SEPARATELY AND THE COUNTY SERVICE OFFICER ACTS AS THEIR SECRETARY.

MY BILL GIVES POWER BACK TO THE PEOPLE, NOT TO ONE INDIVIDUAL. THIS BILL DOES NOT CHANGE THE JOB OR STATUS OF THE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER. THIS INDIVIDUAL WILL MAINTAIN HIS/HER RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING ALL OF THE STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS.

MY BILL ONLY EXTENDS CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SERVICE OFFICER TO THE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THESE CHANGES OCCUR ONLY IN THE COUNTIES WHERE CURRENTLY HOME RULE EXISTS. FURTHERMORE, THIS CHANGE ONLY GOES INTO EFFECT IN COUNTIES WHERE AN ADMINISTRATOR OR AN EXECUTIVE IS PRESENT. THIS CONSTITUTES ABOUT 15 COUNTIES IN WISCONSIN. THIS PROVISION HAS LITTLE OR NO EFFECT UPON THE REMAINING COUNTIES THROUGHOUT OUR STATE.

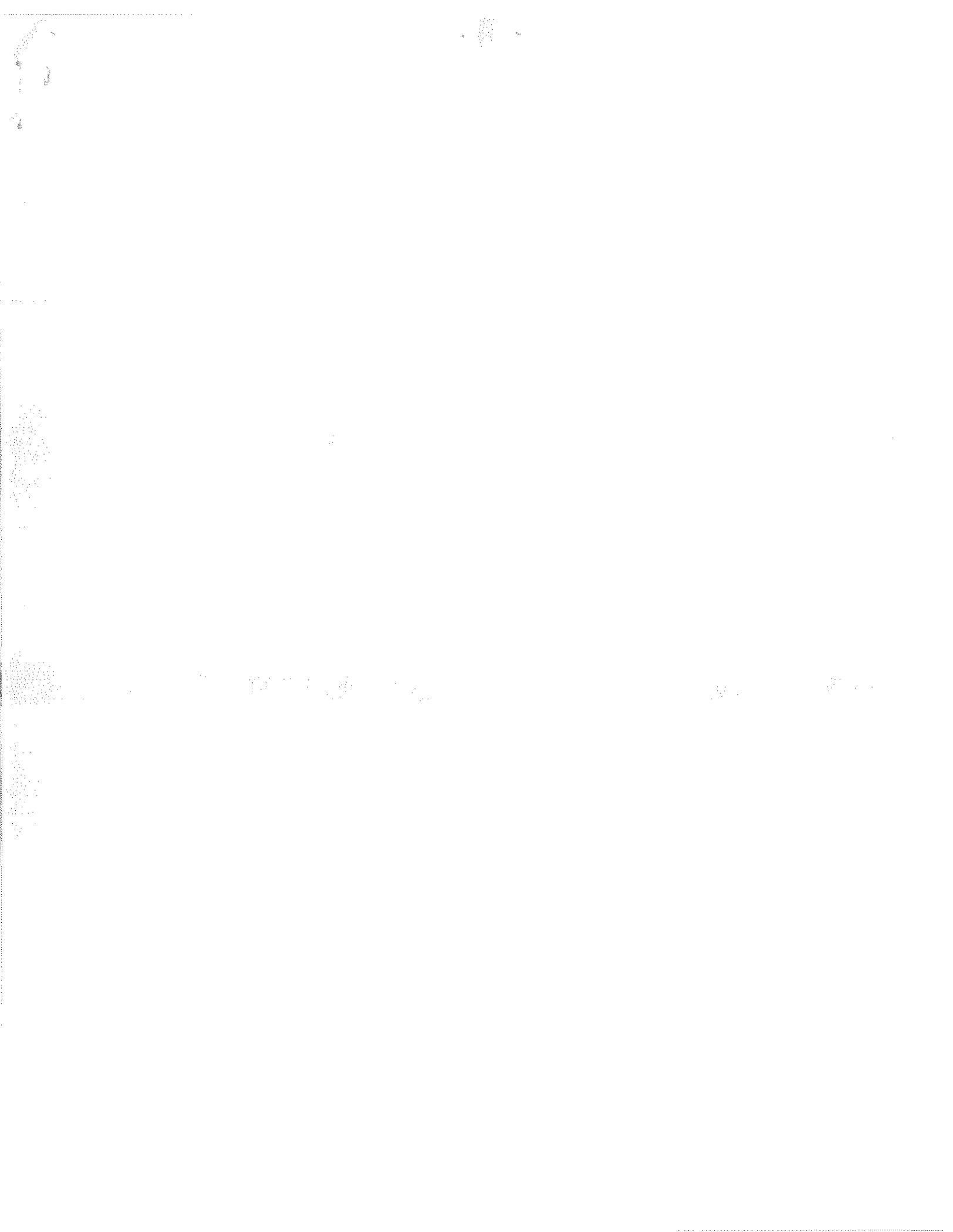
ZUKOWSKI TESTIMONY
NOVEMBER 1, 1995
PAGE 3

THE FUTURE POTENTIALLY WILL BRING GREAT CUTS IN VETERANS SERVICES AND BENEFITS ON THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVELS. FOR THIS REASON, LOCAL OFFICIALS WILL BEGIN TO ASSUME A MUCH GREATER SHARE OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CARING FOR THESE NEEDY VETERANS. INCREASING LOCAL CONTROL IN THIS WAY IS ONE METHOD OF INCREASING EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE FUTURE.

WHAT BETTER WAY IS THERE TO KEEP OUR COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE COMMISSION STRONG THAN TO LEAVE THE POWER IN THE HANDS OF LOCAL PEOPLE WHO CLEARLY ARE BETTER SUITED TO MAKE THESE IMPORTANT DECISIONS?

I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT AB 179 IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF VETERANS THROUGHOUT OUR GREAT STATE. I URGE YOU TO JOIN ME IN THIS EFFORT TO PLACE THIS DECISION-MAKING POWER IN THE HAND OF LOCAL PEOPLE.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TODAY. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE AT THIS TIME.



WISCONSIN STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSIONS

**** RESOLUTION NUMBER 1-95 ****

**** ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 15, 1995 ****

REMOVING THE VETERAN SERVICE COMMISSION FROM THE HOME RULE REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the Veteran Service Commission has a long tradition in Wisconsin counties of providing emergency assistance to veterans and their spouses, dependent children, widows, and dependent parents, and;

WHEREAS, the Commissioners, prior to Home Rule, had power to grant, deny, and/or set the amount of the aid, and;

WHEREAS, the Commissions work with fixed budgets and do not have power to increase budgets during a current fiscal year, and;

WHEREAS, when Home Rule was implemented to maintain better administrative control over other Commissions and Boards that could adjust budgets, Veteran Relief, being a commission, was automatically included, and;

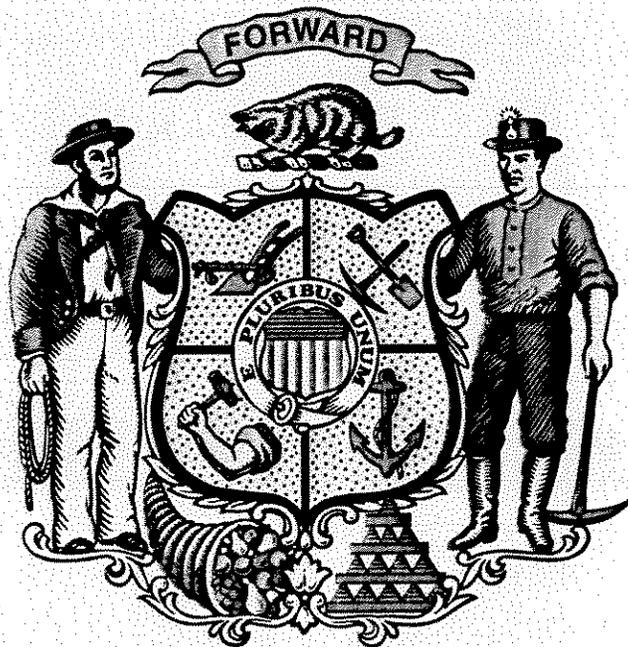
WHEREAS, it is the intent of this resolution to change the effect of Home Rule only on the Veterans' Service Commissions, not on the County Veteran Service Officers or their appointment, and;

WHEREAS, the result of Home Rule reduced experienced and dedicated Commissioners' roles to that of advisors, and;

WHEREAS, specifically deleting under 45.11 the words "Except as provided under sub(2)," and totally deleting 45.11(2) and 45.13(3) restores Veteran Service Commissions to active roles in Home Rule counties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the bill introduced into the Wisconsin State Assembly AB 179 be supported or reintroduced in the next legislative session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be forwarded to the Board of Veterans Affairs, the Committee Chairs of Veterans Affairs in the Assembly and Senate, and the County Executive or administrator in Home Rule counties.



Wisconsin State Association of
County Veterans Service Commissions

Larry
Smerting -


RESOLUTION NUMBER 1 - 95

REMOVING THE VETERAN SERVICE COMMISSION
FROM THE HOME RULE REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the Veteran Service Commission has a long tradition in Wisconsin counties of providing emergency assistance to veterans and their spouses, dependent children, widows, and dependent parents,

WHEREAS, the Commissioners, prior to Home Rule, had power to grant, deny, and/or set the amount of the aid,

WHEREAS, the Commissions work with fixed budgets and do not have power to increase budgets during a current fiscal year,

WHEREAS, when Home Rule was implemented to maintain better administrative control over other Commissions and Boards that could adjust budgets, Veteran Relief, being a commission, was automatically included,

WHEREAS, it is the intent of this resolution to change the effect of Home Rule only on the Veterans' Service Commissions, not on the County Veteran Service Officers or their appointment,

WHEREAS, the result of Home Rule reduced experienced and dedicated Commissioners' role to that of advisors,

WHEREAS, specifically deleting under 45.11 the words "Except as provided under sub(2)," and totally deleting 45.11(2) and 45.13(3) restores Veteran Service Commissions to active roles in Home Rule counties.

BE IT RESOLVED that the bill introduced into the Wisconsin State Assembly LAB179 be supported or reintroduced in the next legislative session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be forwarded to the Board of Veterans Affairs, the Committee Chairs of Veterans Affairs in the Assembly and Senate, and the County Executive or Administrator in Home Rule counties.

ENDORSED BY THE 1996 MEETING OF THE WISCONSIN STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSIONS