

WISCONSIN STATE  
LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE HEARING  
RECORDS

1997-98

(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

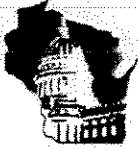
➤ **97hr\_ajr0042\_AC-VMA\_pt01**

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ \*\*

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ \*\*



Robert K.  
**ZUKOWSKI**

Co-CHAIR: JOINT SURVEY COMMITTEE ON TAX EXEMPTIONS

VICE-CHAIR: Veteran and Military Affairs Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBER: Agriculture; Highways & Transportation; Health

*Called  
3/10/97*

69TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## Office Memorandum

**To:** Legislative Colleagues  
**From:** State Representative Robert K. Zukowski  
**Date:** March 8, 1997  
**Re:** Co-sponsorship of Assembly Joint Resolution Memorializing Congress to Fully Fund the Federal Share of State Veterans Homes Construction Projects

Currently, there are 87 state veterans home care facilities in 42 states throughout the United States with more being constructed annually. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has the authority to make necessary aid payments to states maintaining state veterans homes. However, this federal agency has failed to keep pace with the number of state veterans homes applications for new construction projects, which has resulted in an unfunded balance of over \$200,000,000.

The state veterans homes program has proven to be a cost-effective provider of quality care services to veterans in need who require domiciliary, nursing and hospital care. This program will continue to be a vital link to quality health care for veterans nationwide as well as a low-cost alternative for veterans in need of long-term nursing care.

An important part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs mission is to promote the care and treatment of veterans in state veterans homes in order to achieve its goal of developing and maintaining the highest possible quality patient care for eligible veterans. Indeed, the Department of Veterans Affairs itself has recognized the state veterans homes program as the lowest cost alternative among all nursing care alternatives.

Our nation's veterans unselfishly served our nation in its time of need. We simply cannot turn our backs on these patriots when they are in need of the proper health care they so justly deserve. I hope you will join me in requesting Congress to honor its commitment to its brave men and women who served by correcting this imbalance.

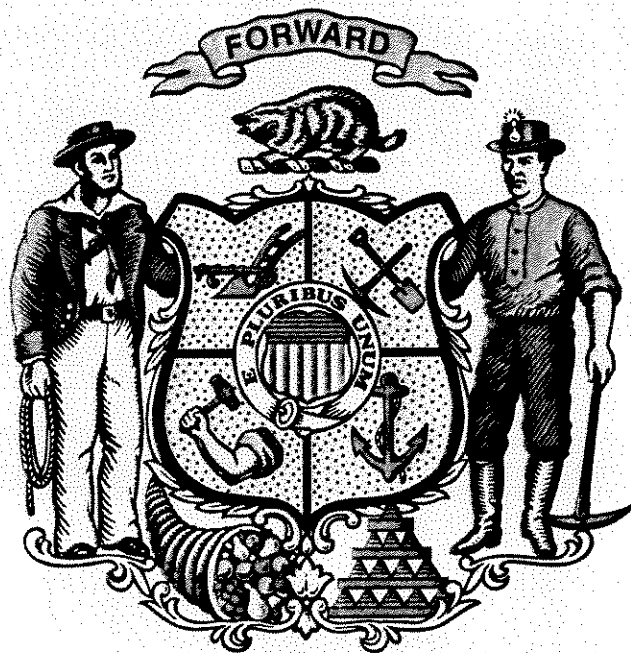
Please find attached a copy of this resolution. If you would like to co-sponsor this Assembly Joint Resolution, please contact **Scott** or **Anne** in my office at **267-0280** by **March 14th**. Thank you.

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

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# AJR 42 TESTIMONY

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SUBMITTED BY:

SCOTT E. SUDER

ON BEHALF OF

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

ROBERT K. ZUKOWSKI

WISCONSIN'S 69<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Thank you Chairman Musser, Honorable Committee Members, and special guests for this opportunity to testify before the Assembly Veterans and Military Affairs Committee this morning.

The aftermath of war is a painful physical reality for thousands of Veterans who placed themselves in harms way in order to preserve the freedoms we continue to enjoy today.

Although hostilities cease following a conflict, the needs of many injured during wartime have just begun.

Congress had the foresight to recognize this need for long-term health care following the Civil War.

Since establishing that commitment, Veterans homes have served those who have sustained injury during battle for over 100 years.

Assembly Bill 42 highlights a very important and pressing issue for our nation, namely the long-term care of its aging Veterans population.

As our aging Veterans population increases, so then does our need to keep pace with the cost of constructing new veterans homes which care for the men and women who served their country in its time of need.

Wisconsin has also answered this challenge through its commitment to the King Veterans Home, one of the 87 state veterans care facilities located in 42 states throughout the nation.

I congratulate the State of Wisconsin and this committee on keeping its commitment to maintain this facility at King.



However, while State of Wisconsin continues to honor its commitment to our Veterans, our Federal Government has failed to deliver upon its promise to meet the funding needs for Veterans' homes.

Presently, Congress funds state veterans home construction grant programs at 65% of the total cost.

Proposed cuts in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs budget threaten to jeopardize the remodeling of old facilities and construction of new facilities. Without this funding, construction of a new Union Grove facility may never take place.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the state veterans homes program is cost-effective. This successful program has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as the lowest cost alternative among all nursing care alternatives (both public and private).

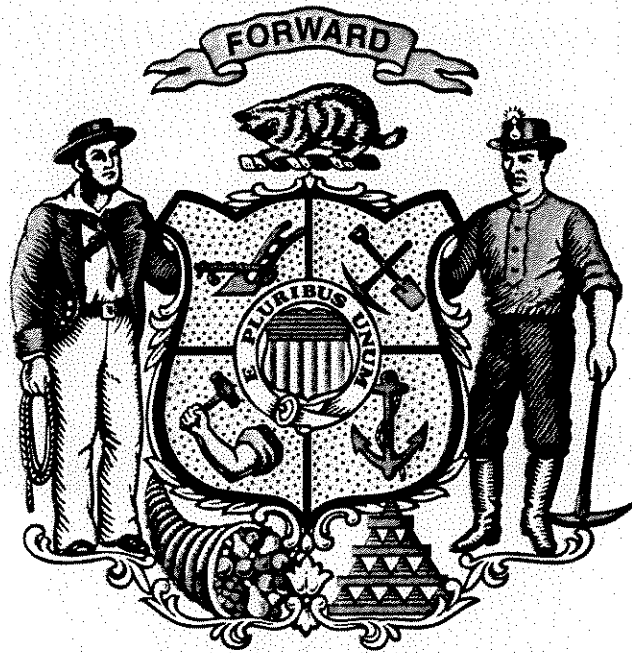
It is therefore inconsistent for the U.S. DVA to shower accolades upon this successful program while at the same time failing to fund it sufficiently.

Currently, an unfunded balance of over \$200,000,000 exists, an amount which will continue to grow each new fiscal year.

Therefore, I am urging this committee and the Wisconsin State Legislature to send a wake up signal to the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress on this critical health care matter.

Congress must begin to keep its promise to this nation's veterans in their time of need. What message does this send to youth if we abandon the very people we expect them to honor and look to as examples of heroism?

Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify on this pressing funding matter which could have potentially devastating effects on the future health care security of our nation's Veterans.



# State of Wisconsin



1995 Assembly Joint Resolution 42

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## ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

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**Relating to:** honoring the sacrifices of American prisoners of war and persons missing in action.

Whereas, a new stamp will be unveiled by the U.S. Postal Service on May 29, 1995, in honor of the courage and sacrifice of American prisoners of war and those who remain missing in action; and

Whereas, the stamp honoring POWs and MIAs will feature a pair of military identification tags displayed in front of the "Stars and Stripes" waving free in a sky of blue; and

Whereas, our prisoners of war often faced inhumane treatment by enemy forces and many American prisoners of war died from torture and unconscionable conditions while in captivity; and

Whereas, the families of Americans listed as missing in action must continually confront doubts and fears regarding the loss and fate of their loved ones; and

Whereas, many former POWs continue to face physical and mental distress as a result of brutal mistreatment while they were held prisoner by forces hostile to the United States; and

Whereas, the U.S. government must continue to seek the fullest possible accounting of all of the MIAs who served this great country and have not been granted the freedom to return to their families; and

Whereas, when Americans pay tribute to POWs and MIAs from our nation's wars, they also are honoring the virtues of duty, honor and patriotism; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That** the Wisconsin legislature recognizes and honors the sacrifices of Wisconsin's and all of America's POWs and MIAs and their families.

Senator Brian D. Rude  
President of the Senate

Representative David T. Prosser, Jr.  
Speaker of the Assembly

May 30, 1995

Date

Charles R. Sanders  
Assistant Chief Clerk