



## 2009 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 52

October 21, 2009 – Introduced by Senators VINEHOUT, KEDZIE, GROTHMAN, COWLES, OLSEN, TAYLOR and SULLIVAN, cosponsored by Representatives DANOU, NEWCOMER, STRACHOTA, TURNER, BIES and TOWNSEND. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1     **Relating to:** the life and public service of Ernest Paul Sobotta.

2             Whereas, Ernest P. Sobotta, lifelong resident of Independence, Wisconsin, died  
3     October 8, 2009, at the age of 93; and

4             Whereas, Ernest was born January 9, 1916, and served the city of  
5     Independence, Trempealeau County, the state of Wisconsin, and his country for his  
6     entire life; and

7             Whereas, Ernest served in the National Guard and with the U.S. Army in the  
8     African and European theaters of WWII and was a proud member and commander  
9     of American Legion Post 186; and

10            Whereas, Ernest was a pioneer in the telephone industry: he began his career  
11     as a lineman for the REA during the Great Depression, became the general manager  
12     of the Independence Telephone Company, and was one of the founders, and served  
13     as general manager, of the Tri-County Telephone Cooperative for Trempealeau,  
14     Buffalo, and Jackson counties, which was the first telephone company in the nation  
15     to offer exclusively private line service; and

1           Whereas, Ernest served as president and board officer of the Wisconsin State  
2   Telecommunications Association and was voted to its hall of fame for a lifetime of  
3   service and leadership, and he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the  
4   National Telephone Cooperative Association for his pioneering work in the industry;  
5   and

6           Whereas, Ernest was a founder and officer of Western Wisconsin  
7   Communications Cooperative, the first organization in the nation to offer cable  
8   communications in a rural area; and

9           Whereas, he worked with the Kellogg Foundation, local rural electrification  
10   and telecommunications leaders, the University of Wisconsin System, local schools  
11   and businesses, and members of Congress and the Wisconsin legislature as a  
12   cofounder of Project Circuit/the Western Wisconsin School Consortium, a  
13   first-in-the-nation landmark education project linking five rural school systems  
14   through two-way telecommunications which allowed rural students a broader range  
15   of educational opportunities; and

16           Whereas, he served over ten years as a member of the Trempealeau County  
17   Board of Supervisors and served as the Trempealeau County civil defense officer, an  
18   alderman in the city of Independence, and the president of the Library Board; and

19           Whereas, Ernest served as a member of numerous community organizations,  
20   including the Lion’s Club, the Elk Rod and Gun Club, and was a founder of the  
21   Independence High School Wrestling Booster Club; and

22           Whereas, Ernest was a longtime member of the Independence Volunteer Fire  
23   Department, a board member of the Grandview Nursing Home in Blair, and a board  
24   member of the Trempealeau County Parks and Recreation Department, and for  
25   many years he wound the clock in the Independence City Hall clock tower; and

1           Whereas, Ernest was an avid hunter and never missed an opening day of deer  
2 season, and he enjoyed his large garden, orchard, and apiary, as well as jewelry  
3 making with his wife; and

4           Whereas, Ernest loved adventure, travel, and high school sports and was an  
5 unwavering fan of the Chicago Cubs and his athletically accomplished  
6 grandchildren; and

7           Whereas, he was proud of his five children, who are all UW–Madison  
8 graduates, and especially proud of his 12 grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

9           ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the legislature of  
10 the state of Wisconsin recognizes the dedication, commitment, and public service of  
11 Ernest P. Sobotta to his family and to the citizens of Independence, Trempealeau  
12 County, the state, and the nation and offers its sincere sympathies to Ernest's family  
13 upon his passing.

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(END)