



KEVIN PETERSEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Chairman Petryk and honorable members of the Committee on Veterans;

Thank you for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 733 – relating to: an addition to the 2013-15 Authorized State Building Program.

As per the analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau; Assembly Bill 733 amends the 2013–15 Authorized State Building Program to add one project for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The project involves the construction of the John R. Moses Skilled Nursing Facility at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. The project is financed with \$52,000,000 in program revenue supported borrowing and \$28,000,000 in general fund supported borrowing.

As the following quotes demonstrate; Assembly Bill 733 has bi-partisan support in both the Assembly and the Senate.

Rep. Petersen

"Veterans - we cannot; we will not, we must not forget who they are. For they reflect America. Whether we welcome them back to civilian life upon leaving the military or we ensure their comfort in their waning years, we have an obligation to those who have risked their all for all of us".

Rep. Hesselbein

"It is our obligation to treat our veterans in a manner that retains dignity, compassion and comfort when they most need this level of long-term care."

Sen. Petrowski

"Despite ongoing controversy at the federal level over military service members and veterans benefits, I am proud that Wisconsin has continually made veterans a priority. This bill reaffirms our commitment to our heroes who have sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy today."

Sen. Carpenter

"We will continue to fight to improve the lives of those who are serving, and have served in our armed forces. They have served us, and we are honor-bound to work to acknowledge their sacrifice with our actions."

The Veterans Home at King is a state operated facility for Wisconsin veterans and their spouses. Building and maintenance for the campus is a 65% - 35% split between the federal and state government.

Every named hall at King honors a veteran with Wisconsin ties. Appointed by Governor Gaylord Nelson, John R. Moses served as Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs from 1962 until he retired in 1982. During his tenure, Secretary Moses led the revitalization of King.

From its original enrollment of 50 members in 1887, King has grown to a community of over 700 members. With four separately licensed nursing homes, it is one of the largest and most independent skilled long-term care facilities in the United States. King also has a chapel and an activity center that contains a post office, theatre, bowling alley, museum, and library.

Two older buildings – Burns-Clemens Hall (circa 1959) and Ove Hall (circa 1929) will be demolished, providing the area needed to build the new skilled nursing care facility. Both buildings have significant structural issues and/or water damage that would require extensive repair.

Once completed, residents of Stordock Hall (circa 1968) will be relocated to Moses Hall. Because long-term care delivery and technology has changed greatly over the years, providing quality care is becoming more and more difficult to our members in the older outdated facility. The new 200-bed replacement skilled nursing facility accords the state the means to fulfill its mission of caring for our veterans.

Moses Hall will adhere to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) parameters for new construction. According to the USDVA; residents should be housed in a home-like environment serving the long-term care needs of veterans and their eligible dependents.

By definition, a “homelike concept” means Moses Hall will consist of living arrangements with 8 – 12 members in small living units i.e. “households.” Each household will consist of personal living rooms and dining areas vs. an “institutional design” with massive dining rooms and long hallways.

Furthermore, Moses Hall will address life safety issues for members experiencing dementia. Currently, members with dementia are housed on Ainsworth Hall’s 2nd floor. An emergency requiring evacuation could render these members

vulnerable. Moses Hall would follow industry standards in housing dementia patients on the ground floor.

Generation after generation of veterans risked their lives, giving all of us the opportunity to live our lives as we choose. Moses Hall will continue King's exceptional tradition of ensuring our heroes live their final years protected in comfort and dignity.

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Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873
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February 13, 2014

TO: Senator Robert Cowles
Room 118 South, State Capitol

FROM: Al Runde, Fiscal Analyst

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 544: Skilled Nursing Facility at Wisconsin Veterans Home at King

As requested, this memorandum provides information on the fiscal effect of 2013 Senate Bill 544.

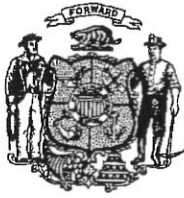
SB 544 would enumerate an \$80.0 million nursing facility at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. The project would be enumerated as the "John R. Moses Skilled Nursing Facility", and would be funded with \$28.0 million in general fund revenue (GPR) supported borrowing and \$52.0 million in program revenue (PR) supported borrowing. However, the bill would not provide any new bonding for the project. Hence, as drafted, the bill would have no state fiscal effect.

Under current law, the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) has a GPR supported bonding authorization of \$10,090,100 to acquire, construct, develop, enlarge or improve facilities at state veterans homes, veterans cemeteries, and the veterans museum. The Department also has a PR supported bonding authorization of \$51,347,100 for the same purpose. As of December, 2013, DVA had \$634,021 in bonding remaining to be issued from its GPR bonding authorization and \$29.9 million remaining to be issued from its PR bonding authorization. Most of the remaining bonding authorizations are likely attached to prior DVA project enumerations. As a result, additional bonding would need to be provided under these authorizations in order to complete the project using these two bonding authorizations.

If passed, this bill would enumerate the facility in the 2013-15 state building program and DVA could request any needed funding for the project in the next biennial budget process.

I hope this information is helpful. Please contact me if you have any questions.

AR/sas



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March 12, 2014

TO: Representative Kevin Petersen
Room 105 West, State Capitol

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 733

You asked if 2013 Assembly Bill 733 meets the statutory requirement for referral to the Joint Committee on Finance.

Section 13.093 of the statutes states:

All bills introduced in either house of the legislature for the appropriation of money, providing for revenue or relating to taxation shall be referred to the joint committee on finance before being passed.

Assembly Bill 733 does not appropriate funds, provide for revenues, or relate to taxation. Therefore, it does not meet the statutory requirement for referral to the Joint Committee on Finance.

BL/lb



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Scott Walker, Governor

John A. Scocos, Secretary

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**STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

March 18, 2014

Dear Chairman Petryk, Ranking Member Ringhand, and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding this hearing on Assembly Bill 733. This bill is important to the future of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. It will enable the Department to deliver care to Wisconsin veterans in an environment worthy of our veterans' service to our country. The 200 beds authorized by AB 733 will replace beds currently authorized at King and is not an expansion.

The John R. Moses Skilled Nursing Facility will begin the process of moving the Veterans Homes at King into position for serving the next generation of veterans. The facilities at King no longer represent the cutting edge of care. During the decades that have passed since the construction of our current facilities, the needs of our members have changed. Our facilities must be modernized to meet those needs. For example, we know our population diagnosed with dementia will continue to grow. The new facility will be specifically designed with a unit to meet the needs of those diagnosed with dementia.

I appreciate the work done by Representative Petersen in introducing this bill. I ask the committee to support this bill and help move the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King into the 21st Century.

Sincerely,
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Scocos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

JOHN A. SCOCOS
Secretary



Department of Wisconsin

*STATEMENT OF
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DAV WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
ON BEHALF OF
ASSEMBLY BILL 733
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS
WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY
MARCH 18, 2014*

Chairman Petryk, Ranking Member Ringhand, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Wisconsin DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and our 16,000 members, all of whom are wartime wounded and injured veterans, I am pleased to present our views on Assembly Bill 733 (AB 733) which amends the 2013-2015 Authorized State Building Program for the construction of the John R. Moses Skilled Nursing Facility at the State Veterans Home at King.

The construction project will be financed by \$52 million in program revenue supported borrowing and \$28 million in general fund supported borrowing for a total of \$80 million supported borrowing.

The Committee needs to be aware that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a State Home Construction Grant Program which is authorized to make aid payments to States that maintain Veterans Homes and to make grants to States for construction and major improvements at these Homes.

The Grant Program is under Title 38, United States Code (USC), Section 8131-8138 and is regulated in Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 59.

Under Title 38, the State of Wisconsin will pay approximately 1/3rd of the entire construction cost and the federal government will pay the balance.

Recently we were in Washington DC for the 2014 DAV Mid-Winter Conference entitled *Operation: Keep the Promise*. During the Conference, we met with Rep. Paul Ryan, House Budget Committee Chairman; Senator Tammy Baldwin; and Senator Ron Johnson.

It is our considered opinion, the State of Wisconsin needs to act now while there is still some degree of cooperation in Washington.

Wisconsin DAV recognizes the growing long-term health care needs for veterans. We feel the John R. Moses Skilled Nursing Facility will serve a vital purpose in meeting those needs.

*DAV of WISCONSIN, 1253 Scheuring Road, Suite A, De Pere, WI 54115-1070
Phone: (920) 338-8620 Fax: (920) 338-8621 e-mail: gbdav@sbcglobal.net*

As DAV State Commander Rodney Helgeson, Sr. so eloquently stated in his endorsement of the Senate's version of this bill - SB 544:

"Historically, Wisconsin's Veterans Homes have provided quality programs and services to deserving veterans. Since DAV has always been a strong proponent of sufficient funding for construction projects at State Veterans Homes which offer necessary services to these veterans, we strongly support this bill and urge swift passage."

Many in the legislature and in the general public give much verbal support to veterans and their needs. Although we greatly appreciate this support, veterans need more than feel-good gestures. They need tangible support. This bill is tangible support.

We ask the Committee to pass AB 733. *Keep the Promise.*

DAV appreciates the opportunity to submit our views on Assembly Bill 733. This concludes my testimony, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to answer any questions related to my statement and the views I have expressed on behalf of DAV.



Military Order of the Purple Heart
Department of Wisconsin



Fuzz Spangler
WI MOPH Department Commander
415 E. 4th Street
Richland Center, WI 53581

March 18, 2014

Chairperson Petryk, Vice-Chair Weatherston, Ranking Minority Member Ringhand, and other Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Veterans;

I am unable to attend the public hearing you today on AB 733. I have thus asked our State Legislative Officer, Jason Johns, to read you the following statement from me:

Many of our members, who suffered injury at the hand of the enemy, unfortunately find themselves needing skilled nursing care sooner in their lives than their civilian counterparts, or even their fellow non-combat wounded veterans for that matter. We are very excited at the potential of the John R. Moses Skilled Nursing Facility being constructed to provide a place for our members to live at while receiving top -notch health care and a sense of community with their fellow veterans.

On behalf of the Military Order of the Purple Heart of Wisconsin I wish to express our gratitude on your hearing of this legislation today and thank Representatives Petersen & Hesselbein for their bi-partisan authorship of this great bill.

Best regards,

Fuzz

DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



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February 12, 2014

**Chairman Petrowski & Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on
Transportation, Public Safety, and Veterans and Military Affairs;**

Due to a prior scheduling conflict I am unable to attend the hearing today but have asked our State Legislative Committee Chair Jason Johns to relay the following statement to you:

“SB 544 is common sense legislation that expedites the construction of the John R. Moses Skilled Nursing Facility for the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. There is an overwhelming demand by our states’ veterans for additional skilled nursing care, often resulting in waiting lists at our veterans’ homes. SB 544 will help the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans of Foreign Wars assure that our members have a place to go for quality care surrounded by the support and camaraderie of their brothers and sisters-in arms.”

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Wisconsin asks for your support of SB 544 and looks forward to the groundbreaking of the John R. Moses Skilled Nursing Facility in the very near future.

Renee Simpson
Renee J Simpson

Commander
Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Wisconsin

March 18, 2014

Chairperson Petryk;

As the State Secretary for the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans I wish to inform you that we support AB 733 and look forward to seeing it become law.

In the ever-increasing demand for finances needed to support the needs of our members as they reach the twilight of their lives, and to assure that our newest generation of our warriors receive the assistance they need, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs receives a multitude of grant applications. Now, more than ever, it is important that we know where each penny is being spent and that we can verify it has been used for veterans services. In the situation where this is not the case, the WDVA needs to have the tools to recoup, cease distributing, or not issue any further approvals for grants' monies.

AB 733 is wholeheartedly supported by the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans as a common sense piece of legislation that helps to enforce issues of accountability with money meant for the betterment of veterans lives in the state.

Thank you,

Bill Hustad

State Secretary

March 18, 2014

Chairman Petryk and Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs;

Due to prior commitments I am unable to attend today's hearing on AB 733. I have asked our State Legislative Committee Chairman, Jason Johns, to read my testimony to you.

We have seen, in very recent history, a dramatic swing in WDVA's ability to increase its services to veterans while gaining a surplus in the budget. This is unprecedented and must be recognized. I can remember not to many years ago the VSO's asking the legislature to allow the lottery to be used to fund the VTF. It is amazing how this issue has turned around. This is a sign of the leadership of Sec. Scocos and his staff and all employees of the WDVA.

I have had the opportunity to tour all facilities of the WDVA during my tenure as Dept. Commander. I will confess that most are in great shape however we must remain vigilant in our responsibilities to provide the best possible facilities and services to our veterans. As a contractor by trade I more than most realize the need to stay on top of maintenance issues. We must also have the insight to realize when it is no longer in the best interests of taxpayers to keep maintaining a facility that has out lived its viability.

You have before you an opportunity to be proactive on two such facilities that have served the veterans community well but are no longer viable by maintenance standards. This decision is not unlike deciding whether to repave a highway or completely rebuild it. In the case of the buildings at King they have been repaved to the fullest extent and it's time to rebuild.

I have not had the opportunity to present this legislation to our Department Executive Committee, as they have not met since its introduction, so therefore cannot express an official position. However, this is my personal opinion after a personal assessment of the buildings in question and I will recommend to the Dept. Executive Committee the same opinion of support of AB 733.

Thank you,

Ken Rynes

Commander
American Legion Department of Wisconsin

