



---

# SCOTT ALLEN

---

REPRESENTATIVE • 97<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

14 January 2016

## Testimony on SB339AB 441

Thank you Chairman Petrowski for holding a hearing on this important bill. Thank you committee members for your consideration.

Some have asked me why we need this legislation.

This bill codifies by statute Executive Order #137 by Governor Walker. This bill improves the process of veteran recruitment put in place by the administration under that executive order based on the input of cabinet secretaries and administration officials.

Why, some people ask, do we need a veteran employment initiative at all?

Well, to use an expression from my Army days, military personnel are “squared away.”

Merriam-Webster defines “square away” as “to put everything in order or in readiness.”

Veterans, more often than not, are squared away. They tend to be neat in appearance, they tend to be punctual, they are respectful and courteous, they are aware of the importance of and appreciate training, they desire to demonstrate competence, and they have demonstrated a commitment to public service. These are the qualities we desire in the employees of the State of Wisconsin for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Critics might suggest that we are favoring one group of people over another with this legislation. They have misinterpreted the bill.

Any preference extended to veterans under this bill is based on merit. The military, with its regimentation and training, provides an education that, in my opinion, is incomparable to that which you might find at any institution of higher learning. The alumni of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, or their affiliates, have earned our respect through their accomplishments. The veterans employment initiative recognizes the value of this education. The initiative also recognizes the value of their service.

Note that I’ve offered an amendment to the bill that makes the bill stronger in terms of increasing employment of veterans by the State of Wisconsin. It simply eliminates the

extension to include independent contractors of a state agency in the hiring goals, so an agency should meet the goals on their own without counting private firms engaged by the state.

With this bill we improve the quality of the workforce employed by the State and the quality of service provided to our citizens. We also send a clear message to teenage students and young adults thinking about pursuing a military career that we, in the State of Wisconsin, recognize the value of that career path.

I ask you to support the Veterans Employment Initiative.



---

# HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

January 14, 2016

## TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 339

Thank you Chairman Petrowski and the Senate Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 339.

There are currently more than 400,000 veterans living in Wisconsin. Approximately 60,000 of these veterans have a service-connected disability. Unfortunately, the unemployment rate for veterans is currently higher than the general population.

In response to this need, I am proud to be the senate author of the Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative - Senate Bill 339 and Assembly Bill 441.

In June of 2014, Governor Walker issued Executive Order #137 relating to the Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative with a goal of increasing the number of veterans holding permanent state government positions. Executive Order #137 places a special emphasis on encouraging the employment of disabled veterans with service-connected disabilities who often face special challenges and barriers to gaining employment.

In response to Executive Order #137, Representative Allen and I introduced Senate Bill 339 and Assembly Bill 441 to create a Council on Veterans Employment. This council will advise and assist the Governor and state agencies with recruitment and employment of veterans. This effort has the goal of helping all veterans, but especially those with a service-connected disability. The bill also requires state agencies to lay out a plan to recruit and retain more veterans in state government based on goals in each specific agency.

This bill does not mandate the employment by the state for veterans. Rather, this bill gives veterans a "fair shot" at employment in all of our state agencies.

I believe Wisconsin has done a great job of providing opportunities for our veterans returning home. However, the Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative is another great step toward ensuring those veterans that return to our state after serving our country have the opportunities they need to succeed.

I would like to thank Representative Allen for his leadership on this legislation. I would be happy to take questions from committee members at this time.

201 West Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 7843  
Madison, WI 53707-7843



Scott Walker, Governor

John A. Scocos, Secretary

**STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Phone: (608) 266-1311  
Toll-free: 1-800-WIS-VETS (947-8387)  
Fax: (608) 267-0403  
Email: [WisVets@dva.wisconsin.gov](mailto:WisVets@dva.wisconsin.gov)  
Website: [www.WisVets.com](http://www.WisVets.com)

January 14, 2016

Senate Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs

Chairman Petrowski, Senator Carpenter and Members of the Committee,

I write in support of Senate Bills 339, 418 and 419. Senate Bill 339 will serve to bring more military veterans into State of Wisconsin permanent employee positions. The value that our military veterans bring to the workforce will assist in enhancing the quality and dedication of all our state employees and show our veteran community we value their service and experience.

SB 418 would authorize WDVA to annually provide grant funding to Wisconsin nonprofits which provide financial assistance or other services to veterans and their families.


Grants awarded in 2014 supported services including UW-Milwaukee and UW-Superior veteran student programs designed to assist in the retention of returning student veterans from Active Duty (AC) and overseas deployments. Additionally, the grant money provided therapy to veterans suffering from PTS and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), along with supporting veterans struggling to furnish their new found homes or fill their food pantries. SB 418 will allow WDVA to continue supporting such private nonprofits which continue to have a significant and positive impact on our Wisconsin veteran community.

Finally, SB 419 would eliminate the current veteran employment grant program and replace it with a more effective veterans employment and entrepreneurship grant program. The program requirements under current law present a barrier to effective use of the employment grant. The changes proposed in SB 419 will enable the DVA to more effectively incentivize the hiring of disabled veterans. The bill also adds an entrepreneurial aspect to the program that will help veterans build their own small business. Under current law, the grant program restrictions which were tied to unemployment (UI), disqualified most veterans from qualifying for the program.

The DWD currently has 51 veterans in Job Ready status rated at 50% Service-Connected Disability (SCD), and 557 veterans in training programs that are also rated at 50% SCD. None of these veterans are eligible with this program the way it is currently worded. SB 419 would change that status.

I respectfully request your support of SB 339, SB 418 and SB 419.

Sincerely,  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

  
JOHN A. SCOCOS  
Secretary



#### OFFICERS

Bill Roseneau, Waushara  
President

Joe Aulik, Winnebago  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Tammy Walters, Oneida  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tony Tyczynski, Past President  
Rock Larson, Legislative Chair  
Kevin Johnson, Ozaukee 2016  
Aloysius Nelson, Kenosha 2016  
Kevin Johnson, Bayfield 2017  
Scott Bachowski, Barron 2017  
Andrew Miller, Dodge 2018  
Jane Babcock, Kewaunee 2018  
Charlene Cobb, Sheboygan,  
Treasurer

January 13, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Petrowski  
Room 123 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707-7882

RE: Support for SB 339, SB 418 and SB 419.

Dear Senator Petrowski,

Unfortunately I and members of the CVSO Association of Wisconsin's Legislative Committee are unable to attend your hearing of the Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs on January 14.

Please convey to the committee members our Associations support for the following bills:

- SB 339 Relating to: establishing the Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative
- SB 418 Relating to: a nonprofit organization grant program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and making an appropriation.
- SB 419 Relating to: a veterans employment and entrepreneurship grant program, veteran employment grants, granting rule-making authority, and making an appropriation.

As always the CVSO Association of Wisconsin looks forward to hearing from you on this or any other veteran related legislation. I can be reached at the Wood County Veteran Service Office, P.O. Box 8095, Wisconsin Rapids WI 54495-8095, via email at [rlarson@co.wood.wi.us](mailto:rlarson@co.wood.wi.us) or at (715) 421-8421.

Sincerely,

Rock A. Larson  
Legislative Committee Chairman  
CVSO Association of Wisconsin



## **Department of Wisconsin**

***STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD  
AL LABELLE  
DAV WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WISCONSIN STATE SENATE  
JANUARY 14, 2016***

**Chairman Petrowski and distinguished Members of the Committee,**

**Thank you for allowing DAV or Disabled American Veterans this opportunity to present our view on this important bill.**

**As you know, DAV is a nonprofit veterans service organization of wartime service-disabled veterans. We are dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead a high quality lives with respect and dignity. In Wisconsin, DAV has well over 15,000 members.**

**The purpose of this statement is to give the Committee an overview and background on Senate Bill 339 (SB 339) *Relating to Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative*.**

### **BACKGROUND**

**On June 13, 2014, DAV was honored to have Governor Scott Walker sign Executive Order #137 (EO #137) *Relating to the Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative* at our State Convention. EO #137 was written by the Governor's Office with input from DAV and other Veterans Service Organizations.**

**It established a Council on Veterans Employment to advise and assist the governor and state agencies with the recruitment and employment of veterans, including specifically veterans with a service-connected disability rating.**

**The Council consisted of the Secretary or a representative from Department of Administration (DOA), Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), and Department of Workforce Development (DWD); the Director or a representative from Office of State Employment Relations (OSER); and the President or a representative from the Wisconsin University System.**

**To ensure proper implementation, DAV attended numerous Council meetings. We found the implementation of the initiative to be done in a professional, cordial and effective manner. It was our feeling that EO #137 needed to be converted into the state statutes.**



## OVERVIEW ON SB 339

Similar to EO #137, the bill was written *not as a how to, but in a how can we work with you manner*. The crafting of SB 441 by the Governor's Office was done as a collaborative. Each draft was sent to all the Council representatives for their feedback and input. Before it was introduced, all Council representatives signed off on SB 339.

One change from EO #137 is the composition of the Council. It was slightly modified to reflect a change in the State Budget. Since OSER was assimilated into DOA by the budget, the Director of the Division of Personnel Management (DPM) in DOA was added to replace the Director of OSER.

From our experience, DAV has found it is better not to dictate, mandate or force quotas on a government agency. Honey is better than vinegar. It is always better to stress the positive attributes a qualified veteran brings to a position on a continual basis.

Three words best sum up this bill's emphasis – qualified, goal and positive.

1. A veteran seeking employment in a state agency needs to have the proper credentials or qualifications, not be hired solely because the person is a veteran.
2. Since quotas tend to antagonize agencies and other special interests, non-punitive goals are utilized. If a goal is not attained, the Council's response will be – *perhaps the problem is us, how can we better help you attain your goal.*
3. The reason an agency should hire qualified veterans will be the positive attributes they bring to a position due to their military training and experience. Veterans are team and goal oriented, organized, self-starters, punctual, etc. The main selling point to an agency is qualified veterans will improve an agency's efficiency.

For a better understanding of the Council's workings, the Wisconsin Council on Veterans Employment – 2015 Annual Report - accompanies this Statement.

If the Committee, in its wisdom, wishes to make any major changes to SB 339, it is our considered opinion that proposed changes be done as a collaborative. Feedback and input should be obtained from the Council representatives to ensure all parties are in agreement.

As you are aware, the legislative schedule has been expedited. One concern we have is failure to act on SB 339 in an expeditious manner may result in the clock running out.

Thank you for this opportunity. This concludes my statement. I hope the Committee finds it of some help.

If the Committee has any questions, we will be glad to answer them at this time.

January 14, 2016

Good morning Chairman Petrowski and members of the Transportation and Veterans Affairs committee. We are here to make comments on Senate Bill 339 relating to establishing the Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative.

We would like to thank Senator Marklein, Lasee, Olsen, Ringhard, Wanggaard and Wirch for sponsoring this important legislation.

We also would like to thank Rep. Allen and Assembly members of the Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs for introducing AB 441. At the public hearing for AB 441 on December 10, 2015 we had some concerns that the bill as written would not result in more veterans being hired by state agencies. We went on record that para (5) page 6 of AB 441 be removed. Para 5 stated "that an agency may include veterans who are employed on a full-time basis with an independent contractor that provides services to the agency." We saw no correlation that would result in more veterans especially disabled veterans being employed as state employees. We met with Rep. Allen that day with our concern.

We are happy to hear that Rep. Allen did amend AB 441 removing this section from the bill and we commend Rep. Allen for this.

While we still have some concerns whether the bill will result in additional veterans, especially disabled veterans being hired, we fully support the passage of AB441 and SB 339 with para 5 removed.

In the coming year(s) we will work with the legislators, government agencies and UW institutions and the Governor's office to make further recommendation/changes to the statute, if needed.

We have updated state agency and UW institution data for 2015 and you all have copies of this data (tables 1-4).

We are optimistic the state agencies and UW institutions will step up and make it a priority to hire qualified veterans, especially disabled veterans.

Bruce Markert

Dan Schmitz

Tom Gomach



<b>Table 1.</b>	<b>UW Individual Institution for 2015</b>					
	Total	Veterans	Vet %	Total Hires	Veterans	Vets %
	Employees	Employees				
UW Eau Claire	1135	30	2.60%	162	0	0.0%
UW Extension	1105	9	0.01%	172	3	1.7%
UW Green Bay	606	14	2.30%	89	2	2.2%
UW LaCrosse	1198	38	3.20%	182	6	4.6%
UW Madison	14604	214	1.50%	2297	36	1.6%
UW Milwaukee	3311	54	1.60%	489	11	2.3%
UW Oshkosh	1315	23	1.80%	170	3	1.8%
UW Parkside	450	5	0.01%	71	0	0.0%
UW Platteville	903	25	2.80%	165	7	4.2%
UW River Falls	903	13	1.40%	93	3	3.2%
UW Stevens Point	1097	23	2.10%	169	5	2.2%
UW Stout	975	32	3.30%	139	3	2.2%
UW Superior	355	10	2.80%	54	5	9.3%
UW System Admin	269	2	0.01%	73	3	4.1%
UW Whitewater	1167	26	2.20%	194	10	5.2%
UW Colleges	918	20	2.20%	94	4	4.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30311</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>1.80%</b>	<b>4613</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
<b>State Agency Hires</b>				<b>3246</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>8.60%</b>
<b>(excluding UW)</b>						



<b>Table 3</b>						
<b>Veteran Population Wisconsin</b>						
Year	Total Veterans	% of State Population	Disabled Veterans	% of Veteran Population		
2015	413,723	7.20%	61,993	15.0%		
2014	413,723	7.2%	61,993	15.0%		
2013	418,461	7.3%	58,214	13.9%		
2012	397,644	7.0%	56,465	14.2%		
2011	407,624	7.2%	56,784	13.9%		
2010	417,654	7.2%	53,534	12.8%		
2009	427,527	7.5%	51,210	12.0%		
2008	436,958	7.7%	45,206	10.3%		
2007	448,328	7.9%	48,121	10.7%		
2006	457,450	8.1%	44,898	9.8%		
* All Veteran population data from the annual OSER Veterans Employment Reports for Wisconsin State Government						

\* Data reported same for 2014 and 2015

**Table 4. VETERAN POPULATIONS**

TOTAL VET	409,000		
TOTAL VET - 20-64	209,000		
RATIO OF TOT TO AGE 20-64 %	51		
TOTAL DISABLED	62,000		
TOT DISAB 20-64	31,500		
SP DISABLED	37,000		
SP DISAB 20-64	19,000		
TOTAL POP 20-64 W/O VETS	2.9 MIL		
TOT VET 20-64/TOTAL POP	7.20%		
DSV VET 20-64/TOT POP	1%		
TOTAL DISAB/TOT POP	2%		
SP DISAB 20-64/TOT VET 20-64	1%		







