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# TONY KURTZ

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 50<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## 2019 Senate Bill 537

Relating to: veteran-related tuition grants for certain veterans and dependents enrolled in private nonprofit institutions of higher education and making an appropriation.

Public Hearing: Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families

December 4, 2019

Thank you, Chairman Kooyenga and members of the committee for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 537 (SB 537).

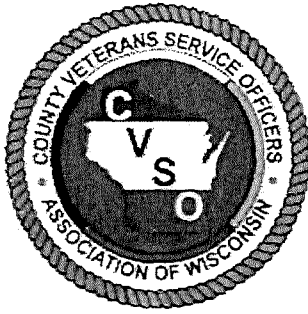
Wisconsin has a reputation as a state that is very veteran friendly. Our state provides great benefits to our veterans from tax incentives, grant opportunities, and housing assistance. We have a tradition in this state of making sure our veterans feel valued.

One of the most prominent benefits Wisconsin provides is the Wisconsin GI Bill (WI GI Bill). This program offers tuition remission for eligible Wisconsin veterans and certain dependents of those eligible veterans that attend public institutions of higher education in Wisconsin. Under current law, if a veteran attends UW-Madison or Milwaukee Area Technical College, they are eligible for tuition remission under the WI GI Bill. But, if a veteran decides to attend Viterbo University, or another private nonprofit institution, they are not eligible for tuition remission under the WI GI Bill.

SB 537 seeks to correct this by creating a new grant program that complements the current tuition remission through the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB). This bill requires HEAB to make veteran-related grants for students enrolled in bachelor's or graduate degree programs at private nonprofit institutions that are members of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. The grants are made for students who would have qualified for veteran-related tuition remissions if they had enrolled in the University of Wisconsin System or a technical college. Using the same process and requirements under current law, this bill would allow an eligible veteran to attend a private nonprofit institution and receive tuition remission.

SB 537 seeks to build upon Wisconsin's legacy of taking care of those that have served our country by expanding access to educational opportunities in our state.

I thank you for your time and for listening to my testimony. I would be honored to have earned your support of SB 537 and will take any questions you have for me at this time.



December 4, 2019

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Chair Kooyenga and Members of the Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on Senate Bill 537 Veteran-related tuition grants for certain veterans and dependents enrolled in private nonprofit institutions of higher education and making an appropriation. I am Nathan Bond the legislative chair for the County Veterans Service Officer Association of Wisconsin. Our association supports this bill

The People of Wisconsin can be proud of the fact that they have some of the finest public Universities and Technical Colleges in the nation. They can also be very proud of the fact that they remit the tuition and classroom fees at these institutions for Veterans and for the family members of disabled veterans, through the Wisconsin GI Bill.

Wisconsin is also home to many excellent private, nonprofit institutions of higher education. These institutions provide numerous programs that prepare veterans to transition from military service to the modern, competitive, workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

By expanding the Wisconsin GI Bill to include a \$2,000 per student, per year, grant for veterans and qualifying family members to attend one of this State's private, nonprofit institutions, Wisconsin will continue its journey to making this State the most veteran-friendly state in the Union. It will increase opportunities, and broaden the choice among institutions of higher education, giving further incentive for veterans to pick Wisconsin as their home after serving the Nation.

Once again, our association supports the passage of Senate Bill 537. Subject to your questions, this concludes our testimony.

Nathan M. Bond  
Legislative Committee Chair  
CVSO Association of Wisconsin



Milwaukee School of Engineering  
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December 4, 2019

**Testimony of Lena Scheibengraber  
Senior Financial Aid Counselor and Veteran Affairs School Certifying Official  
Milwaukee School of Engineering**

**Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families  
Re: Senate Bill 537, Veteran-Related Tuition Grants**

Chair Kooyenga, Senator Darling and other distinguished committee members, my name is Lena Scheibengraber and I have the distinct honor of serving veterans and military members as the Senior Financial Aid Counselor and Veteran Affairs School Certifying Official at Milwaukee School of Engineering. I want to thank you for this opportunity to address SB-537 and allow me to voice my support of this legislation.

As someone whose partner, father, brothers, uncle, and grandfathers have all served, giving back to our veterans is something very important to me. Upon starting my role in 2013, I made it my mission to make our services at MSOE top-notch. It wasn't that the university didn't have anything – we had tutoring services, accessibility accommodations, great financial aid packages and options – but there was something lacking. After pioneering the creation of a Veterans Support Committee and planning our first Veterans Day Luncheon in 2014, a domino effect happened. The establishment of a student-run veterans organization, a veteran-specific space (our Veterans Lounge), a sponsorship through Rockwell Collins and attendance at their Veterans Summit, a policy change to give current military members and veterans priority registration, donor-gifted veteran-only parking spaces and scholarships, a discount in our bookstore, Red/White/Blue graduation cords, the installation of a Prisoner of War/Missing In Action (P.O.W./M.I.A.) Honor Chair, a senior project building a Victory Garden, a new veteran onboarding process, and the distinction of being named 6<sup>th</sup> Best College for Veterans in the Midwest – all of these sparked from the small idea that maybe we just weren't doing enough.

As the first point of contact for prospective veterans looking for a university to call home, I often have the conversation about how we participate in the Federal Post 9/11 G.I. Bill and Yellow Ribbon Program but not the Wisconsin G.I. Bill. Not only can this be frustrating for the servicemember, but also confusing for them in trying to decide which option will be a better fit. While I am extremely proud of all the services we offer at MSOE, sometimes those general services are not enough; bottom line: financially, things need to make sense. It's disappointing when I hear back from a veteran who decides not to attend MSOE after they hear that we don't have the same tuition benefit as UW System schools – even if culturally, MSOE is more in line with what they want. I see this legislation as providing veterans with that extra benefit. Not only are we showing them how much we value them as individuals, but we are also valuing the freedom of choice.

We say that MSOE is the university of choice for those seeking an inclusive community of experiential learners driven to solve the complex challenges of today and tomorrow. Every day, I see our veterans on campus exceeding the requirements we set for them. Whether they are spearheading projects in a classroom or making structural changes in an organization after they graduate, their impact cannot be overstated. I can tell you dozens of success stories from the veterans who I have worked with over the years – those who thought obtaining an education was out of their reach – especially an education



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at a private university. Attached for you are a few statements from various service members at MSOE, giving you a snippet about why they chose a to attend a private university and what it means to them.

I hope the stories you have heard this morning and the ones you will hear and read after this point help give you all a better idea of the impact this grant can have on our veterans and their families. I can say with 100% certainty that our campus, and our country, is a better place because of these individuals. I encourage you to pass this legislation to ensure that our veterans can choose where they obtain their education post-deployment. Thank you for your attention to this important issue and your commitment to our veterans.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lena Scheibengraber'.

Lena Scheibengraber  
Senior Financial Aid Counselor & Veteran Affairs School Certifying Official  
Milwaukee School of Engineering  
[scheibengrab@msoe.edu](mailto:scheibengrab@msoe.edu)  
414-277-7221

## Milwaukee School of Engineering Student Veteran Testimonies

### **Jared Burks, Navy Veteran, Biomolecular Engineering Major**

I am a new student at MSOE and have a passion for volunteering at Frederick J. Gaenslen School (K-8) teaching STEM classes and workshops. I chose a private college over a public university because I started at a technical college, but I was limited by the roles/positions available to me with an associate's degree in my particular field (Biotechnology). I don't *just* want to be a lab assistant; I want to conduct research and be a part of bigger projects that require more knowledge and skills. With extremely competitive positions, it's not enough anymore to just have a bachelor's degree – I needed to find a specialization that would be attractive to organizations and ensure I was making a difference. I researched the UW schools' programs and they didn't quite offer what I was looking for. There are options for Biomedical Engineering, but I wanted to study BioMolecular Engineering. The two might sound the same but they are very different fields of study. MSOE is the only institution that offers the classes, as well as the degree title I'm looking for.

I feel that I benefit from my education at MSOE by the courses they offer. It's not a general overview of the things I want to learn, but an in-depth study and training for application of what is taught. Once I've obtained my degree, I plan to apply to a study that aims to cure a disease or solve a global issue. Examples are a cure for HIV, cancer, genetic disorders, the clean water crisis, or famine.

### **Jennifer Vanden Bosch, Wisconsin National Guard, Nursing Major**

I am a cadet at Marquette Army ROTC, volunteer for Salvation Army, National Guard Cadet, and work for MSOE Admissions. One thing that attracted me to go to a private college is how tight knit the community is. I felt like I was a person during my tour and not just Student ID number. Additionally, they have a lot more aid and tuition assistance. Once I got into MSOE, I realized that the university has a crazy amount of clinical locations and many connections throughout Wisconsin. By getting hands-on skills it helps my confidence and better prepare me for the real world. I also think that going to a smaller school helped me be more engaged with teachers and seek out tutoring. The professors at MSOE, especially if you have them throughout your time in school, make you very comfortable and you can really see how much they care about you. After graduation, I will commission to the National Guard Nurse Corps and am planning on getting a job at a nearby hospital as a civilian (looking at the VA).

### **Alexander Wilhelm Holborn, Coast Guard Veteran, Mechanical Engineering Major**

I chose a private higher learning institution over a public learning institution for a few reasons. Before I joined the military, I attended a community college in San Diego California. I was enrolled for two years before I gave up. After the first semester it was clear that the vast majority of teachers did not care about teaching. There was very little compassion for students and zero understanding of what a 'work-life balance' should be. Out of the two years I encountered 1 professor that kept the students above all else. While he was a great teacher, it was abundantly apparent that he was also fed up with the system and knew the majority of students were being given a disservice. So, I figured why not try an institution that has to try to keep its customers happy?

I won't lie, I was extremely nervous to go back to school after 10 years. Before my first class started on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, I just kept referring back to my old college experience of cold-hearted teachers that could care less but I was wrong, so incredibly wrong. From day one I saw a striking difference in just how students were treated. I saw a much more caring environment that wants to

## **Milwaukee School of Engineering Student Veteran Testimonies**

foster growth and creativity through state-of-the-art facilities and professors that are true subject matter experts.

In addition, I have yet to meet a professor or instructor that will not give a student the help they need. I'm not even talking about standard office hours. I have had professors that have stayed with me for hours to help me understand concepts. I have talked with other students who have had instructors stay late into the night to help them understand core concepts in preparation for the next day's test. It honestly warms my heart to see professors that want to watch their students succeed.

I am 100% convinced that if I was not going to MSOE I would have dropped out already. From the free tutoring service to the amazing staff, there isn't one aspect of MSOE that I haven't benefited from. Having the option for group tutoring in the library saved me in my first quarter. I really had no idea what was going on and because of my age I felt like I didn't really fit in, so I kept to myself. When I took advantage of the free tutoring it forced me to open up a little and not be so afraid to ask questions in this new setting. It not only helped me understand some of the concepts that I was struggling with, but it gave me the confidence that I am smart and can, eventually, solve a problem.

I still don't know what where I want to be once I graduate. All I know is that I want to be in a position where I can help people. Once I'm able to, I want to set out with engineers without borders to gain in field experience and make a difference.

### **Collin Quinn, Marine Corps Veteran, Computer Science Major**

I decided to attend a private college due to the smaller class sizes, smaller overall student population, and the fact that MSOE has a great reputation and top-notch degree quality. These were all things I was looking for in an education investment. By attending a private school, I have benefited by the means of gaining more interaction with professors/faculty. I get to have one-on-one time with my professors when I'm in need of assistance getting through coursework, figuring out my class schedule, and asking for advice in preparation for getting involved in industry after graduation. I have heard from friends attending UW schools that it's much harder to have those interactions – students who have a class sizes of 80+ students get lost.

After I graduate from MSOE, I plan to stay living and working in Wisconsin to give back, utilizing my Computer Science degree.



**TESTIMONY**

**By**

**Patty Taylor**  
**Senior Director of Financial Aid and Educational Funding**  
**Lakeland University**  
**on**  
**Senate Bill 537**

**Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families**

**December 4, 2019**

Chair Kooyenga, members of the Committee, my name is Patty Taylor. I serve Lakeland University as the Senior Director of Financial Aid and Educational Funding. The Director of Veteran Services resides in my department. Lakeland is a private non-profit university that serves around 4,000 students at 7 locations around the state and Tokyo, Japan.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you how we, at Lakeland University support Veterans. We currently serve around 100 veterans annually at the various locations. We have signed the DoD Memorandum of Understanding and are a 100% Yellow Ribbon Participating University. The Veteran Service Director also provides various program support adapted to the needs of the student veterans LU is enrolling.

We have heard from our veteran students that they appreciate the opportunity to be able to attend class by accessing several different formats. At Lakeland we offer classes in the traditional classroom, real time online access through a format we call Blend-Ed Live, or online on their own time. They have access to past lectures which allows them to review the lecture information. The veteran students have appreciated the flexibility and for some the on-line format is more appropriate for their needs.

LU is in its second year of providing a unique cooperative education program which is helping students address post-graduation debt. This past year we have had veterans that have specifically selected us because of this opportunity to obtain valuable work experiences and build a professional resume while in pursuing a degree.

Lastly, as a mother of a veteran, I can attest to the sacrifices and selfless acts soldiers choose when making the choice to serve their country. It is imperative to me that Wisconsin show the same selflessness and support to the veterans and provide them with a variety of educational opportunities.

To whom it may concern;

As a Veteran of the United States Army and current student of a private nonprofit higher education institution in Wisconsin, I know firsthand that choosing a private institution was crucial towards my academic success.

Private schools such as Lakeland University, offer several things specific to my needs that a larger public school cannot. The smaller class sizes presented here help reduce stress, make me feel more in control of my environment, and allow me to focus on learning rather than the fears I carry in larger crowds. Smaller class sizes give me greater access to professors, tutors, and assistance with classwork. The smaller community here allows me to feel like I'm a part of something again and helps me regain my sense of belonging and purpose. BlendEd classes give me the flexibility to tend to school while also focusing on work and my family. These factors are just some of the many reasons why I chose to attend a private institution.

The benefit of offering financial assistance for Veterans to attend private schools is that it allows Veterans another option to choose the school that is the most appropriate to their individual needs. It helps Veterans reduce stressors they face rather than placing additional barriers in their path to success. Please consider approving any grant that may empower Veterans with the freedom to choose the school that gives them the best chance to succeed. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dustin Merkel



## Military Aligned Student Support and Recruitment (MAS)

Keith Purnell  
*Viterbo Univ.*



Military Aligned Student  
Commitment

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## Military Aligned Students

- **Military Aligned Student:** those currently serving or have served on Active Duty, in the National Guard or as Reservists; combat veterans of present-day and past conflicts; military dependents
- **Mission Fit**
  - Mission: Faithful Service and Ethical Leadership
  - Values: Contemplation, Hospitality, Integrity, Stewardship, Service



Support Services

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## Military Aligned Initiative

**Mission & Purpose:** perform activities and provide services, in collaboration with the Viterbo University community and various support entities in our surrounding communities, which facilitate quality-of-life and successful degree or program completion of each Military Aligned Student (MAS) at Viterbo. These include:

- Attract and enroll Military Aligned Students
- Retain
- Graduation



Support Services

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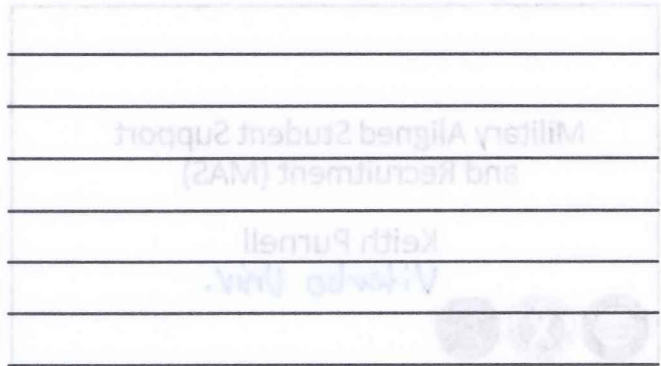
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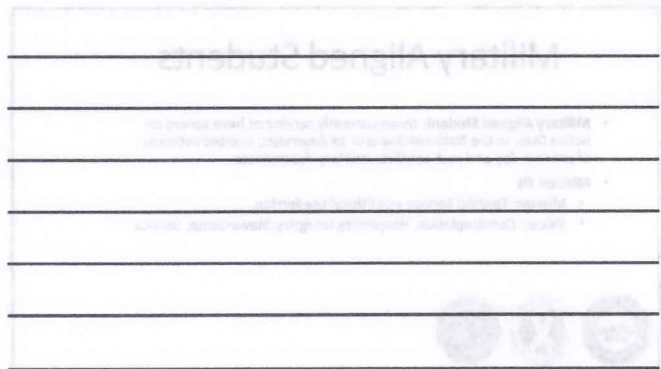
## Military Aligned Student Commitment

- **Dedicated full-time MAS Director**
  - Engaged with students from application through program completion & beyond
- **University cabinet members who are military retirees**
  - Campus Chaplain – Father Conrad Targonski
  - Rick Trietley – VP of Student Affairs
- **Dedicated Veterans Lounge (Reinhart 015) / Yellow Ribbon Program / SVA Chapter**
- **Veterans' connection to St. Francis: warrior, wounded in action, prisoner of war, PTSD, conversion to peacemaker**
  - *Annual veterans pilgrimage to Assisi, Italy*



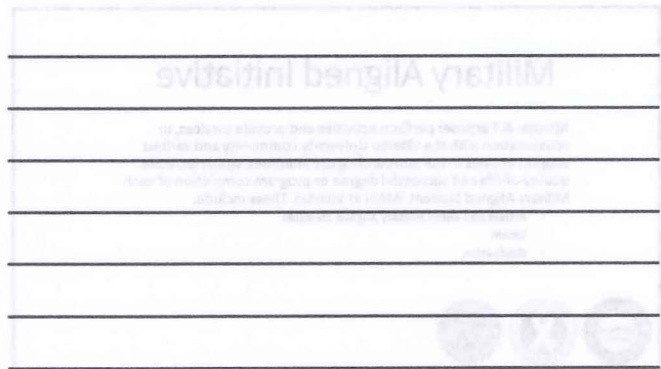
## Support Services

- **On Campus**
  - Military Aligned Students (Keith Purnell/608-796-3039)
  - Financial Aid/Certifying Official (Dawn Mazzola/608-796-3904)
  - Academic Resource Center (Jane Eddy/608-796-3194)
  - Center for Student Success (Tina Johns/608-796-3084)
  - Campus Ministry (Emilio Alvarez/608-796-3805)
  - Campus Chaplain (Fr. Conrad Targonski/608-796-3804)
  - VP Student Affairs (Rick Trietley/608-796-3801)
  - Mathy Fitness Center (Front Desk/608-796-3121)
  - Career Services (Beth Dolder-Zieke/608-796-3827)
  - Counseling Referral Services (LeeAnn Van Vreede/608-796-3808)
  - Army ROTC (Nathan Rudebusch/608-785-8408)
  - Curtis Peterson (Student Veteran Point of Contact & SVA/608-796-3057)



## Support Services

- **La Crosse Area**
  - County Veterans Service Office (Adam Flood/608-785-9719)
  - La Crosse Area Veterans Mentorship Program - LAVMP (Dustin Schultz/608-785-6420)
  - La Crosse Veterans Center (Wesley Porter/608-782-4403)
  - Veterans Affairs River Valley Medical Center-Prim. Care (608-784-3886)
  - Veterans Affairs River Valley Integrated Health Center Outpatient Physical Therapist/Mental Health Clinic (608-787-6411)
  - Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program (Karl Weller/ [Karl.Weller@dva.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Karl.Weller@dva.wisconsin.gov))
  - Ft. McCoy Morale Welfare & Recreation (608-388-7400/ <https://mccoy.armymwr.com/>)





**Alberta Darling**  
**Wisconsin State Senator**  
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges,  
Children and Families  
Senate Bill 537  
Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Thank you Chairman Kooyenga and committee members for taking the time to hear Senate Bill 537. SB 537 continues Wisconsin's tradition of taking care of our veterans through educational assistance.

Wisconsin has long been known as a state that provides great benefits for our veterans, from tax incentives, grant programs and housing assistance. One of our most well-known and impactful benefits offered is the WI GI Bill. Under current law, the WI GI Bill offers tuition remission for eligible Wisconsin veterans and certain children and spouses of eligible veterans that attend public institutions of higher education in Wisconsin.

SB 537 would create a parallel program to the WI GI Bill that expands educational opportunities to those who attend a private nonprofit institution. This legislation helps bring equality to our system by creating a new grant program that complements our current system and continues to prioritize our veterans.

Using the same process and requirements under current law, our bill would allow a veteran to attend a private nonprofit institution and receive a grant of up to \$2,000 per semester or session. Any participating institutions would be required to provide a matching grant to the student.

This legislation has a fiscal cap of \$5 million over the biennium. Therefore, the size of the grant given to the student would vary based on the number of students that apply for the program.

I'd like to thank Representative Kurtz for his leadership on this issue. Thank you again, Chairman and committee members. Please join me in supporting our veterans by expanding educational opportunities here in Wisconsin.



## TESTIMONY

By

**Jarvis Racine, Campus President and Government Affairs Liaison  
Herzing University  
on  
Senate Bill 537**

**Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families**

**December 4, 2019**

Chair Kooyenga and members of the Committee, my name is Jarvis Racine and I am the President of Herzing University's Brookfield Campus and serve as the University's Government Affairs Liaison. On behalf of the University and our 1,300 Wisconsin students, I want to thank you for holding this hearing today and for your support of equitable treatment for our veterans and their families.

Herzing University has, since its founding over 50 years ago, been a strong supporter of our Veterans and their career focused educational pursuits. As a University, our students are eligible for all federal education VA Benefits including; CH33 Post 9/11 funding which encompasses Yellow Ribbon, TOE (transfer of entitlement), STEM, and the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship. Additional qualifying benefits include CH 30 Montgomery GI Bill, CH 31 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Bill, the Veterans Educational Assistance Program and since we signed the DoD MOU (Dept of Defense Memorandum of Understanding), our students are also eligible for Active Duty Tuition Assistance (all branches) and the MyCAA benefit (for spouses of Active Duty Service Members). In addition to these federal benefits, Herzing University offers a 10% tuition discount to all veterans, spouses/dependents of current active duty servicemembers, spouses/dependents of service connected disability servicemembers, and finally, for Active Duty Servicemembers, a \$250/credit discount for bachelor programs and a \$500/credit discount for graduate programs. Clearly, we are working hard to maximize every financial resource we can to assist our Servicemembers.

As you all know, Wisconsin's demand for labor has created shortages in so many key industries and Herzing is well positioned to assist in training the next generation of workers as 70% of our students are enrolled in high demand healthcare degree programs. Our Military students tell us that the key reasons they chose Herzing include our small class sizes, direct entry nursing programs, year-round course offerings, online courses, accelerated degrees and our culture of engaged student support. These are all important factors to our military servicemembers as they look to maximize their military experience and quickly transition into the workforce.

This legislation is about equity and fair treatment and equalizes educational offerings in the state. Our Wisconsin Servicemembers made a commitment to support and defend our country and we should honor their commitment by allowing them to make their choice on the educational institution that best meets their individual educational needs. I thank you all once again for your consideration of this bill.

Testimony regarding Senate Bill 537: Veteran-related tuition grants for certain veterans and dependents enrolled in private nonprofit institutions of higher education and making an appropriation

December 4, 2019

To the Committee,

I first want to thank the members of the committee for taking up this bill and allowing me to speak about it.

My name is Amanda Wolf and I was in the United States Coast Guard for six years. I am currently living in Lake Geneva, WI and attending Herzing University as a nursing student. This is a private non-profit school located in Kenosha, WI.

There is not a great deal I can say on state schools because I have never attended one, but I can say that Herzing University has been amazing to me. I was first interested in Herzing because they had an accelerated program. This was important to my husband and I because it's hard to manage financially when only one person is working full-time. My interest only increased after I applied. The day I sent in my application; I received a call asking if I would like to set a date to speak to an advisor. After speaking to an advisor, the process for enrollment and registration was quick and efficient. Everyone involved tried to create a plan to fit what I needed personally and academically. My classes have been difficult but I have never felt like I could not ask for help, or that I did not have the resources needed to succeed. The fairly small class sizes make it easy to ask questions, get clarification, and be able to take advantage of hands on learning.

On top of the positive things I have mentioned about my own school, I believe the biggest benefit to this bill is flexibility. Individuals that leave the military have a variety of situations; some are the primary jobholders or the primary caregivers, some have limited transportation and some leave with disabilities. My point is that veterans can benefit greatly from having more choices for where to receive an education. Different schools can offer different schedules, classes, locations or special attention to fit their individual needs. I believe that flexibility provides options and options provide opportunities, and if we have the power to give an opportunity to a veteran, that should be our responsibility. Let's give our veterans as many tools as possible so that they can continue to succeed and serve our country. Thank you again for considering this bill.

Sincerely,

Amanda Wolf

Lake Geneva, WI

(775) 217-3487

Good morning. Thank you for this opportunity to encourage your support for Senate Bill 537.

Wisconsin veterans deserve every benefit we can supply and this certainly includes veteran-related grants to support their higher education, regardless of whether their chosen institutions are public or private.

The 24 institutions that comprise the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities serve veterans well. This fall, at Concordia University's Wisconsin campus, we are proud to have enrolled 270 veterans and active duty/reserve military personnel or their dependents. These students represent every possible student type from traditional undergraduate to accelerated graduate learners. Like their fellow Concordians, these students selected Concordia University because it fit their goals, professional aspirations, and - certainly - their values.

Our commitment to these men and women means that we are driven to ensure a world class Concordia University education that is both accessible and affordable. This is why we accept up to 63 military transfer credits, among the most generous in the state, so that our veteran students can leverage their experience and maximize their benefits to attain their degrees.

Additionally, as an institution designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a military friendly school, we have also invested in our veterans department to ensure these students have access to the support they require to achieve their personal and professional goals here on the Homefront. This has resulted in higher than average levels of student satisfaction and retention of our veterans, all of which points to stronger student outcomes.

We are here today to invite and encourage your support of this bill. Higher education supplies so much more than just a diploma or credential. The experiences that learners have within a particular college or university community shape them for life; at Concordia that includes a formation that instills in our graduates a sense of profound purpose and professional passion.

Our doors are open for every veteran student who desires what we offer. And we believe that our Wisconsin veterans should be able to apply their well-deserved benefits to the higher learning institution of their choice. Ultimately, that is what is best for the veteran and better for Wisconsin.

*Gutcher M Jameson*  
SVP



December 4, 2019

Good Morning,

I am Keith Casey and I am the Assistant Director for Community Outreach and Veteran Engagement at Concordia University Wisconsin. In this role, I oversee the Veteran Services Department.

I am a 30-year US Army Veteran, having served the last 26 years as a Commissioned Officer in the Field Artillery on Active Duty with my last position as Director, Curriculum, Education and Training Product and Doctrine Development for the US Army's Fires Center of Excellence. I am a native Wisconsinite, born and raised in Janesville and completed my undergraduate degrees at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

Concordia University Wisconsin is proud to be designated as a Military Friendly University, one of only 20 schools in the state, and is a proud participant in the Yellow Ribbon Program.

Concordia is dedicated to working with our Student Veterans and their families to ensure affordable tuition and our education programs have been consistently recognized as a great return on investment. Veterans have numerous options using military education benefits, applying for scholarships and utilizing financial aid if needed. This also includes transferring up to 63 credits for military training and education for college credit. The average number of credits we typically see transfer is 25. In the past two years, we accepted 50 or more credits for transfer for eight Student Veterans with four Student Veterans transferring 63. This allowed these eight Student Veterans to enter Concordia University Wisconsin as juniors and focus their studies on their core courses required for their undergraduate program. However, one of these Student Veterans was not able to cover the remainder of their undergraduate tuition with their Federal Benefits, but choose to continue his education at Concordia University Wisconsin and are now pursuing his graduate degree here.

As I mentioned, Concordia University Wisconsin accepts:

- Chapter 30 Montgomery GI Bill (Active Duty)
- Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation
- Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill
- Chapter 35 Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance
- Chapter 1606 Selected Reserve Montgomery GI Bill
- Armed Forces Tuition Assistance (TA) Programs

For Active Duty Personnel, Concordia University Wisconsin accepts the Armed Forces Tuition Assistance (TA) Programs. This program offers eligible Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserve members (activated under Title 10 orders) a benefit that funds a portion of their tuition expenses.

Veterans Education Grant (VetEd)  
National Guard Tuition Grant & Reserve Tuition Assistance Program  
Wisconsin National Guard Tuition Grant  
Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts  
Post 9/11 GI Bill STEM Extension  
Yellow Ribbon (unlimited/unlimited)  
Two Scholarships solely for Veterans, Spouse and Dependents. \$1,000 each

Our office of Student Veteran Services is partnered with our Academic Resource Center and combined we are dedicated to supporting Veterans, their spouses and family members. We provide services such as, but not limited to:

Academic Skills Development (test taking, reading comprehension, time management, note-taking)  
Mentoring (both peer to peer and staff/faculty to student)  
Career counseling  
Student Finance/Scholarships  
Academic Advising  
Counseling  
Free Tutoring  
Accessibility (Disability) Resources: coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities

Concordia University Wisconsin is home to the first Student run American Legion Post (1881) on a college campus in Wisconsin with students comprising 80% of the membership.

Concordia University Wisconsin Student Veterans are in the process of establishing a local chapter of the Student Veterans of America. Student Veterans of America, is a 501c non-profit organization run by Student Veterans focused on addressing the needs and concerns of American military Veterans in higher education.

On average, Concordia University Wisconsin receives 1 call per week inquiring if we currently accept the WI GI Bill. Unfortunately, we have to inform them that we do not. This equates to 52 potential Student Veterans who could not attend the school of their choice.

In conclusion, Concordia University Wisconsin is committed to providing first class service to support our Active, Reserve, and Veteran personnel and their families.

COL Keith A. Casey, USA, (RET)

Assistant Director Community Outreach and Veteran Engagement



December 3, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Moriah White and I am currently a full-time student at Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW), a single mother to three young boys and an eight-year United States Air Force veteran. My areas of study are Social Work and Human Behavior and Development. After the completion of my dual bachelor's degrees I plan on applying to the Master of Social Work program at Concordia University Wisconsin. If I am accepted into that program my federal GI Bill will be exhausted several months into it. If I had the opportunity to use my Wisconsin GI Bill to cover the additional academic obligations there would be no worry. However, as that is currently not an option I will have to pursue other means of student payment that may put me into debt.

When researching colleges, I was between CUW and the University of Milwaukee (UWM). During the transfer credit evaluation process my decision was heavily influenced towards CUW as they would accept 63 of my associate degree credits while UWM would only accept 12. In addition to that, CUW is a much shorter commute from my home residence than UWM. As travel time is a significant matter to consider as a single parent, and an extensive commute would not be conducive to my life, I chose to attend Concordia University Wisconsin.

My desired outcome for this issue, is that I would be able to use the funds allocated to my Wisconsin GI Bill for higher education purposes at the university I deem fit.

Thank you for your time in this matter,

Respectfully,

Moriah J. White



December 4, 2019

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Dejanae James and I am currently a student at Concordia University of Wisconsin (CUW). I am a junior here at CUW, studying Justice Public and Policy. During the three years I have spent at Concordia, I've had a satisfying journey finding more about myself, my peers and faculty members. Essentially, this journey help shape and mold me as an individual and a professional.

I chose Concordia due to its prestigious educational background, area of beautification and it's a medium size community. I believed Concordia was the perfect university to grow and develop at, and that is just what I have done. After my first semester at CUW I found out that they financial aid and scholarships would not be enough to cover my education at the University. After finding this out, I got into contact with a recruiter who enlightened me about the National Guard benefits and how they could cover my educational expenses. After I joined the National Guard and was done with the required training, I came back to Concordia to finish where I left off. I would like to continue my education here at Concordia University because it is a place where I can flourish and develop spiritually.

I am currently using the Montgomery GI bill to cover the remaining expenses for my undergrad. In order to continue studying at Concordia, I will need to pay out of pocket. I would like this bill to be granted for myself and others like me whom have formed a comfortable relationship with their University. By this bill being granted, this would open a variety of school choices for service members serving in the National Guard. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Dejanae L. James**  
Justice and Public Policy 21'  
Concordia University Wisconsin

December 4, 2019

Dear Sir or Madam,

I enlisted in the military in 1986, for the sole purpose of receiving a college education. I needed money for school. My parents, who had paid for me to attend a private high school, had informed me that if I wanted to attend college, I had to find a way to pay for it on my own. I learned that if I enlisted in the military, and scored well on the aptitude test, I could receive extra benefits that would help pay for college.

Education was enforced in my family as a means towards economic security. Both of my parents did not receive a college degree, therefore, making me a first-generation college student. My parents believed that with a college degree, you would be to receive a job that paid well.

I am grateful for the educational benefits that have allowed me to receive a college education. I would like to see the WI GI Bill opened and extended to private institutions to afford Student Veterans the opportunity to freely chose and select a college where they can use a benefit honorably earned.

Sincerely,



Kari D. Metts

Veterans Outreach Coordinator  
Concordia University-Wisconsin  
Veteran Services Department

December 4, 2019

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is KaDee Knapper, and I am currently a full time student at Concordia University of Wisconsin (CUW). I am also serving in the Navy reserves with 13 years of combined active duty and reserve time. I concluded my active duty services as to pursue a degree in Athletic Training but continue to serve as a navy reservist.

I choose CUW, which is a private university, because they offered to take 20 credits from my Joint Service Transcript, which is more than other institutions would take at the time I was looking to begin classes.

Another reason CUW is my choice for using my benefits, is that it offers a five year dual degree program for Athletic Training (AT). Meaning that the AT program at CUW combines a Bachelor of Science in Sports Medicine and Master of Science in Athletic Training with the degrees earned concurrently. CUW is one of only a few schools currently offering this format in the state of Wisconsin.

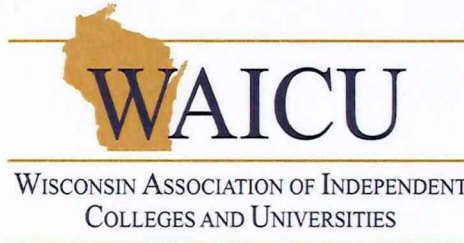
For these, and many other reasons, CUW is my school of choice and I should be allowed to use the benefits I earned at the school of my choosing.

Sincerely,

  
KaDee Knapper

Navy Reservist - CUW Student

ALVERNO COLLEGE  
BELLIN COLLEGE  
BELOIT COLLEGE  
CARDINAL STRITCH UNIVERSITY  
CARROLL UNIVERSITY  
CARTHAGE COLLEGE  
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
EDGEWOOD COLLEGE  
HERZING UNIVERSITY  
HOLY FAMILY COLLEGE  
LAKELAND UNIVERSITY  
LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY



WISCONSIN'S PRIVATE, NONPROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
WORKING TOGETHER FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

MARIAN UNIVERSITY  
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN  
MILWAUKEE INSTITUTE OF ART & DESIGN  
MILWAUKEE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING  
MOUNT MARY UNIVERSITY  
NASHOTAH HOUSE  
NORTHLAND COLLEGE  
RIPON COLLEGE  
ST. NORBERT COLLEGE  
VITERBO UNIVERSITY  
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

## TESTIMONY

By

**Dr. Rolf Wegenke, President**

**Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)**

on

**Senate Bill 537**

**Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families**

**December 4, 2019**

Chair Kooyenga, members of the Committee, my name is Rolf Wegenke. I am President of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or WAICU, the official organization of Wisconsin's 24 private, nonprofit colleges and universities and their 56,000 students.

Thank you for holding this hearing today, for your recognition of the important debt we owe veterans; and for your support for equitable treatment for veterans and their families in their pursuit of an education. All WAICU member colleges and universities serve veterans or family members of veterans and all of our members with undergraduate programs either participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program or have a dedicated point of contact for Veterans issues. Many already have some veteran-targeted financial aid programs in place. Our focus today is on the veterans, not on institutions.

When the Wisconsin GI bill was debated some years ago, students at WAICU institutions were excluded from the program because it was designed as a remission program for public institutions. The law also provided that the public institutions be reimbursed by the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) for a portion of the tuition they remitted. This legislation provides for a \$2,000/semester maximum grant for veterans and dependents attending a WAICU-member college or university and a matching grant from the institution.

Again, this legislation is about equity and fair treatment for students and families. Think of two brothers who served honorably. Both are pursuing higher education, one at Lakeland University and one at UW-Stevens Point. Should the State of Wisconsin support the aspirations of one and not the other solely because they selected a particular Wisconsin college?

The match demonstrates that WAICU members are committed to doing their part to support students. These colleges are a public service and a public good, educating our workforce and serving our veterans and their families.

The legislation proposes to do the following:

- Provide a \$2,000 maximum grant per semester or session for the qualifying veteran, spouse or dependent.
- Require participating institutions to provide a matching grant for the veteran, spouse or dependent who attend the WAICU institution. This match can consist of scholarships, institutional aid or other assistance.
- Require that all qualifying Federal aid first be applied before students become eligible for the state grant dollars. For example, Federal Post 911 GI bill benefits will have to first be applied along with other benefits.
- Provides for 128 credits or 8 semesters of eligibility, whichever is greater. Students must also maintain a GPA of 2.0 to maintain the grant.
- The grant must be applied toward tuition costs and can be used for undergraduate or graduate programs.

The state has a long history of investing in students. Wisconsin is also known for taking care of our veterans and families and treating them fairly and equitably. This legislation builds on that record and takes it to the next level.

## Veterans Certifying Officials



Find more information about resources for veterans, service members, and their dependents at each of our colleges and universities.

<b>Alverno College</b>	Amy Christen	414.382.6040	amy.christen@alverno.edu
<b>Bellin College</b>	Mary Jo Moore	920.433.6640	maryjo.moore@bellincollege.edu
<b>Beloit College</b>	Mary Boros-Kazai	608.363.2640 x2669	boroskaz@beloit.edu
<b>Cardinal Stritch University</b>	Litsa A. Mirakis	414.410.4046	namirakis@stritch.edu
<b>Carroll University</b>	Ann Handford	262.524.7211	ahandfor@carrollu.edu
<b>Carthage College</b>	Lillian Aaron	262.551.6100	laaron@carthage.edu
<b>Concordia University Wisconsin</b>	Barb Ellmaker	262.243.4350	barb.ellmaker@cuw.edu
<b>Edgewood College</b>	Matthew Schroeder	608.663.4266	mjschroeder@edgewood.edu
<b>Herzing University - Brookfield</b>	Christy Nyemeck	262.725.0321	cnyemeck@herzing.edu
<b>Herzing University - Kenosha</b>	Erin Ginn	262.287.9562	eginn@herzing.edu
<b>Herzing University - Madison</b>	Danielle Oest	608.373.5482	doest@herzing.edu
<b>Holy Family College</b>	Ron Jurgens	920.686.6175	ron.jurgens@holyfamilycollege.edu
<b>Lakeland University</b>	Sue Bialk	920.565.1032 x2377	bialkse@lakeland.edu
<b>Lawrence University</b>	Ryan Gebler	920.832.6583	gebler@lawrence.edu
<b>Marian University</b>	Debra Barrett	920.923.8127	dabarrett08@marianuniversity.edu
<b>Marquette University</b>	Mechelle Cockfield	414.288.7507	mechelle.cockfield@marquette.edu
<b>Medical College of Wisconsin</b>	Kari McDermott	414.955.8733	acadreg@mcw.edu
<b>Milwaukee Institute of Art &amp; Design</b>	Admissions Office	414.291.8070	admissions@miad.edu
<b>Milwaukee School of Engineering</b>	Lena Scheibengraber	414.277.7221	scheibengrab@msoe.edu
<b>Mount Mary University</b>	Mary Karr	414.930.3062	karrm@mtmary.edu
<b>Nashotah House</b>	Molly McFazden	262.646.6507	mmcfozden@nashotah.edu
<b>Northland College</b>	Gabrielle Hodges	715.682.1255	ghodges@northland.edu
<b>Ripon College</b>	Ellen Plantz	920.748.8119	plantze@ripon.edu
<b>St. Norbert College</b>	Carl Graf	920.403.3215	carl.graf@snc.edu
<b>Viterbo University</b>	Dawn Mazzola	608.796.3900	dmmazzola@viterbo.edu
<b>Wisconsin Lutheran College</b>	Brett Valerio	414.443.8785	brett.valerio@wlc.edu