

WISCONSIN STATE
LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

1995-96

(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

➤ **

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ **95hr_AC-VMA_Misc_pt07**

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

Wisconsin Evaluation Survey

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL ON VETERANS PROGRAMS

October 1, 1995

Part A-State/Federal Legal Background

- 1. Please list the name of your organization and provide background information on the creation of your organization. In what year and by what legislative act was it established?**

Council on Veterans Programs.

Chapter 443, Laws of 1943 created the Veterans Recognition Board and a statutory veterans advisory committee consisting initially of certain designated veterans organization representatives, a World War II veteran and an American Red Cross representative.

Chapter 604, Laws of 1947 created the Department of Veterans Affairs, which replaced the Veterans Recognition Board. The veterans advisory committee was retained.

The Council was reorganized as the Council on Veterans Programs as part of general state government reorganization through the enactment of the Kellett Act [Chapter 327, Laws of 1967].

- 2. Did it replace another entity? If yes, please provide the name of the entity replaced.**

The statutory advisory committee to the Board of Veterans Affairs. [Please see response set forth above at A1.]

- 3. Please list all legislative acts that have made substantive amendments to the legislation that created your organization and all other acts that have substantively affected the duties, functions and operations of your organization.**

Chapter 437, Laws of 1969; Chapter 333, Laws of 1973; Chapter 313, Laws of 1975; Chapter 437, Laws of 1983; 1987 Wisconsin Act 243; and 1989 Wisconsin Acts 31, 36 and 359.

4. Please list the bill numbers of any current legislative proposals that would directly affect the functions or operations of your organization.

1995 Assembly Bill 41

5. Please indicate federal statutes and regulations that guide or otherwise affect directly the functions, responsibilities and operations of your organization.

There are no federal statutes or regulations that directly affect the Council's functions or operations.

6. Is there any federal statute or regulation that requires the existence of your organization?

No.

7. Please indicate specifically any Attorney General's opinions, Executive Orders, management directives, administrative circulars, judicial decisions or like documents that significantly affect the functioning of you organization.

None.

8. Does your organization promulgate any administrative rules?

No.

Part B-Duties, Responsibilities, Activities and Objectives

1. What are the primary duties (functions) and responsibilities of your organization? Please list them in priority order, including the state statute or rule, or federal statute or regulation which serves as the basis for each duty and responsibility.

The principal statutory duty and responsibility of the Council, pursuant to Sec. 15.497 (2), Wis. Stats., is to "advise the Board of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs on solutions and policy alternatives relating to the problems of veterans." Specifically, although not necessarily in order, the Council:

- ★ Identifies the needs of Wisconsin's veterans community;
- ★ Recommends the most effective and efficient manner of addressing those needs;
- ★ Provides advice and recommendations pertaining to the maintenance, use and management of the Veterans Trust Fund;
- ★ Makes recommendations on administrative rules and legislation that might impact on Wisconsin veterans.

Historically, the Council has acted on what it believes to be its inherent obligation to also present its views, recommendations and advice, on behalf of Wisconsin's organized veterans community, on appropriate veterans affairs matters to the Governor, the Legislature and Congress. The Council is not specifically mandated to do so. However, custom and usage over time has established the appropriateness and effectiveness of doing so.

2. What are the primary activities of your organization?

- ★ Identifying and discussing how to best address the needs of veterans through Council meetings, including appropriate briefings of interest to the veterans community. The Board of Veterans Affairs meets after each Council meeting. At these Board meetings, a formal presentation of Council actions and recommendations is made to the Board of Veterans Affairs.
- ★ Making recommendations on veterans-related administrative and legislative proposals to the Board, Department, Governor, Legislature, and Congress.
- ★ Establishing special Council committees and working groups to address veterans issues. These committees can be Council-initiated or be requested by the Department or Board [e.g. At the department's request, the Council created a committee to study the need for a new state-run veterans cemetery and to make appropriate recommendations, including site selection. The Council committee's work and the subsequent recommendations by the Council served as a foundation for the development of the new state veterans cemetery in southeast Wisconsin.
- ★ Having representation on various department special committees, including budget development, eligibility issues and the review of existing or proposed department programs for purposes of increasing their effectiveness or facilitating their implementation.
- ★ Having representation on the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation Board of Directors which exemplifies the cooperative effort by the Board, Department and Council that has resulted in a nationally recognized veterans museum.

3. If your organization has any formally established goals or objectives, please list all of them and indicate how they were established. Indicate which duty or responsibility of your organization to which each pertains.

The Council has no "formally established" goals or objectives other than its statutory mandate to advise the Board of Veterans Affairs and Department of Veterans Affairs on matters relating to the needs and concerns of Wisconsin's veterans.

Are the goals and objectives time-related and specific enough to be measured.

Not applicable.

If none are listed, please explain the absence of formal goals and objectives.

To date, the Council has not found them necessary to being able to fulfill our statutory mandate.

4. Please describe the system or data that your organization uses to measure attainment of objectives.

Not applicable.

5. Please provide two (2) copies of any report on the extent or your organization's attainment of objectives during the most recent period for which it was measured.

Not applicable.

6. Please specify the objectives of your organization for the next five years.

Our principal objective is to continue to advise the Board of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs of the perspective of Wisconsin's organized veterans community with regard to departmental policy, administration and operations, as well as with respect to administrative and legislative matters in the veterans affairs arena. Additionally, we plan to continue to provide that input to the Governor, Legislature and Congress.

Part C-Composition and Operations

1. Please indicate the legally specified representation and total membership of your organization.

Sec. 15.497 (2), Wis. Stats. specifies that certain designated veterans organizations shall be represented on the Council and that each of those organizations has the sole authority for appointing its representative.

The Council's membership is presently statutorily set at twenty-two [22] of which twenty-one [21] organizations are presently represented.

If there are vacancies, please indicate the length of time each vacancy has existed and the reason for the vacancy.

The American Legion's Council seat has been vacant since 1990. The American Legion has taken the position that its national headquarters prohibits its participation on the Council because Council representation [i.e. voting strength] is not determined proportionally to each Council member's total organizational membership.

2. Please provide the names and addresses of all current members.

★AMVETS

Mr. Jack Molnar
Zablocki VA Center, P.O. Box 6
Milwaukee, WI 53295

★AMERICAN EX-POWS

Mr. Philip Muth
467 Sparks Avenue
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

★AMERICAN LEGION

VACANT

★AMERICAN RED CROSS

Mr. Thomas H. Wynn, Sr.
3330 West Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53208

★ARMY-NAVY UNION

Mr. William Priorie
10943 West Wells Street
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

★CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS

Mr. Leon Urban
3843 East O'Brien Road

Oak Creek, WI 53154

★COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS [CVSO] ASSOCIATION

Mr. Francis Everson
Courthouse, Room C121
Post Office Box 670
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235-0670

★DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Ms. Reba L. Eslinger
N9074 Woodbridge Road
Spooner, WI 54801-9212

**★FEDERATION FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE VETERANS [formerly Federation of
Minority Veterans]**

Mr. Alberto Villarreal
1542 South 3rd Street
Milwaukee, WI 53204

★JEWISH WAR VETERANS

Mr. Paul Fine
8010 North 67th Street
Brown Deer, WI 53223

★MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Mr. Paul A. Bialk
5350 South 110th Street
Hales Corners, WI 53130

★MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART

Mr. John L. Hammel
Post Office Box 525
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

★NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BLACK VETERANS

Mr. William Sims
2844 North 37th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53210

**★WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS
[WACVO]**

Mr. Ron Schultz
9214 Dunkalow

Franksville, WI 53126

★NAVY CLUBS OF THE U.S.A.

Mr. Leo Neu
1246 Oregon Street
Racine, WI 53405

★POLISH LEGION OF AMERICAN VETERANS

Mr. Anthony J. Vrana
5159 Maplewood Drive
Greendale, WI 53129

★VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Mr. Tony Eulo
c/o VARO, Building 6
Milwaukee, WI 53295

★VETERANS OF WORLD WAR I OF THE U.S.A.

Mr. Ray Fuller
865 West 18th Street
Oshkosh, WI 54901

★VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

Mr. Jess Jespersen
3217 Marietta
Milwaukee, WI 53211

★VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Mr. Marvin J. Freedman
6627 Columbus Drive
Middleton, WI 53562

★UNITED WOMEN VETERANS

Ms. Phyllis Perk
205B North Thompson Drive
Madison, WI 53714

Please indicate:

a. Which category of legally specified representation each member satisfies.

Set forth immediately above.

b. Which of the members hold officer positions.

Marvin J. Freedman, Chair

Jess Jespersen, Vice Chair

Phyllis Perk, Secretary

c. Which are designated voting members.

All members are entitled to vote.

d. Which members expressly represent the general public.

None.

e. The profession or occupation of each member.

Each member is a Wisconsin veteran.

f. How each member was appointed.

Pursuant to Sec. 15.497 (2), Wis. Stats., each member is appointed by the veterans organization he or she represents.

g. The original appointment date and number of remaining years in the term of each member.

Every member is appointed in August of each year and is seated at the Council's October meeting.

3. What is the legally designated term of office or membership?

One [1] year.

4. On what grounds and by whom can organization members be removed?

A Council member may be removed by the veterans organization he or she represents on whatever grounds the organization deems appropriate.

Have any organization members ever been removed as described above.

None of whom we are aware.

5. How are organization members compensated?

Members receive no compensation. They are reimbursed for actual travel expenses consistent with established reimbursement rates established by the State of Wisconsin.

6. What are your organization's quorum requirements?

A simple majority of the total number of statutorily authorized members [i.e. 12].

7. Please provide the dates and locations of all meetings held during the past two state fiscal years. Additionally, provide a list of who was notified about these meetings and include the names of all organizations members and others attending. Please include two (2) copies of the agendas and complete minutes for each of these meetings.

See Attachment A for the dates and locations of all meetings held during the last two [2] state fiscal years. Copies of the Council's agendas and minutes for the last two [2] years are attached, as requested, as Attachment B. The names of those in attendance at the Council meetings are set forth at the beginning of each meeting's minutes.

8. Please provide summaries of all major organization reports (i.e. annual reports) or actions during the past two state fiscal years and provide two (2) copies of each.

★ The Council is required to file with the Legislature on September 30 of every odd-numbered year a report on the membership and activities of the Council and each of its member organizations. Two copies of the Council report, dated September 30, 1995, for the period July 1, 1993 through June 30, 1995 are attached as Attachment C.

★ All significant actions taken by the Council during the time period in question are summarized at 9. below.

9. Please identify the administrative and legislative recommendations proposed by your organization during the past five years, and the status of each recommendation.

★ September 14, 1990: The Council endorsed the Department of Veterans Affairs budget proposal. A motion was passed calling for the Board of Veterans Affairs to meet with previously appointed Council representatives to discuss ongoing veterans issues [the Council had previously appointed members to meet with the Board to further develop the Department's budget proposals, but the Board declined to do so].

Status: The Department's budget was included in the state budget in substantially the same form as proposed and endorsed by the Council. Meetings between the Board and designated Council representatives were not held as requested. However, a report by the Council to the Board, prepared after the August 1990

Council meeting concerning the need to further address the health care needs of older veterans, homeless veterans, post-traumatic stress disorders, Agent Orange, veterans education and the needs of peacetime veterans resulted in some modifications to the Department's budget request.

★ January 18, 1991: The Council passed a motion calling on the City Council of Madison to reject a proposed resolution designating Madison as a sanctuary for military deserters and resisters [the Persian Gulf War was in progress].

Status: The Madison City Council rejected the proposed resolution.

★ February 15, 1991: The Council adopted motions:

★ In opposition to increasing the interest rate on economic assistance loans above a rate of 6%.

★ Opposing any changes in the veterans part-time study grant.

★ Supporting the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly resolutions memorializing Congress to allow general obligation bonding to be utilized for first mortgage loans by all Wisconsin veterans who qualify generally for state veterans benefits.

★ Urging the Legislative Council's Special Committee on Veterans Employment to come up with a Wisconsin veterans preference employment program that would create "real" veterans preference in the state.

Status: The Economic Assistance Loan rates have never been raised above 6%. The Part-Time Study Grant Program had income limits imposed. The Legislature adopted a joint resolution memorializing Congress with regard to using GO bonding to provide first mortgage loans to all Wisconsin veterans. The Legislative Council's Special Committee recommended far-reaching legislation to create "real" veterans preference in Wisconsin and the Legislature ultimately passed the resulting veterans preference bill.

★ March 15, 1991: The Council was requested by a legislative committee to recommend how veterans who served in the Middle East should be referred to for purposes of special veterans license plates. The Council passed a motion recommending that the designation "Persian Gulf War Veteran" be used. In addition, the Council declined to go on record in opposition to the mothballing of the USS Wisconsin.

Status: The Legislature passed special license plate legislation for Persian Gulf War veterans using the Council's recommended designation. The federal government mothballed the USS Wisconsin.

★ April 19, 1991: The Council adopted a motions to endorse federal legislation [S. 777 and H.R. 1250] to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with regard to the eligibility of veterans for mortgage revenue bond financing and asking the Wisconsin Congressional delegation to support the legislation.

Status: The federal GO bonding legislative proposals were never acted upon.

★ May 14, 1991: The Council passed motions:

★ Endorsing Assembly Substitute Amendment 1 to AB 123 [concerning disabled license plate certifications].

★ Supporting the findings of the Legislative Council's Special Committee On Veterans Employment concerning veterans preference, expanding eligibility for state veterans benefits, increasing veterans retraining grants and establishing small business incentives in Wisconsin.

Status: AB 123 passed the Assembly, but failed to gain passage in the Senate. Ultimately, legislation was passed expending veterans preference, expanding state veterans benefit eligibility, significantly increasing veterans retraining grants and establishing a veterans business loan program [since repealed].

★ June 14, 1991: The Council passed motions:

★ Opposing the elimination of the Second Mortgage Loan Program; supporting the transfer of garage construction to the Home Improvement Loan Program and the remainder of the Second Mortgage Loan Program to the Home Improvement Loan Program once federal law permits.

★ Supporting the recommendations of the Legislative Council's Special Committee On Homelessness and the Assembly Veterans & Military Affairs Committee's efforts to put funding into the state budget for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project.

Status: The Veterans Home Improvement Loan Program has completely replaced the former Second Mortgage Loan Program. The Legislative Council's comprehensive bill on homelessness failed to be enacted. However, after being passed three times, and vetoed twice, state funding for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project was approved and funded.

★ September 20, 1995: The Council adopted motions:

★ Approving unanimously the Council's protocol including the provision reaffirming its policy that each organization represented on the Council is entitled to only one vote [i.e. the Senate model of representation].

★ Endorsing the four veterans preference-related bills, SB 255, SB 256, SB 257 and SB 259.

★ Supporting the introduction of separate legislation to provide for homeless veterans and Agent Orange appropriations which had been vetoed by the Governor as part of the biennial budget; and striking the income limits from the Part-Time Study Grant Program.

★ Opposing the provisions of the proposed By-Laws of the Veterans Museum Foundation relating to the composition of the foundation's Board of Directors.

★ Opposing any further cuts in the federal Veterans Affairs budget and asking for restoration of the previous fiscal year's cuts.

Status: The Council's protocol approved at this meeting remains in effect today.

SB 255 [veterans preference] passed; SB 256 [expanding eligibility for state veterans benefits and requiring that certain reports be prepared by the Department of Veterans Affairs] failed, although a significant portion of the provisions were included in subsequent successful legislation; SB 257 [increasing the appropriation for veterans retraining grants] failed although its exact provisions were included in later legislation; and SB 258 [veterans preference in state purchasing] passed.

Separate Agent Orange and homeless veterans legislation was introduced. Although not successful, the specific provisions that had been previously vetoed were included in a later budget adjustment bill. Legislation to strike the income limits from the Part-Time Study Grant Program was introduced, but not successful. In the following biennial budget process, the income limits were raised high enough to alleviate some of the Council's concerns.

The Veterans Museum Foundation By-Laws that were ultimately adopted addressed some of the concerns of the Council concerning the composition of the foundation's Board of Directors.

Further cuts in the federal veterans affairs budget have continued to take place. There was no restoration of cuts made the prior fiscal year.

★ November 15, 1991: The Council passed an advisory motion, having been asked for input by U.S. Sen Robert Kasten, in opposition to automatic federal COLA increases in veterans benefits.

★ Status: Legislation was not passed requiring the automatic COLA increases.

★ December 13, 1991: The Council adopted a series of motions making recommendations concerning the selection of a new Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary by the Board and the Council's role in the process.

Status: The Board embraced most of the Council's recommendation concerning the selection and qualifications of the new Secretary. However, the Board declined to give the Council any active role in the selection process although it had done so during the previous selection process.

★ January 10, 1992: The Council passed motions:

★ Endorsing Senate Substitute Amendment 1 to SB 1 creating a private right of action for certain civil rights violations because of its potential benefit to Wisconsin veterans.

★ Opposing any legislation creating a veteran or military plate recognizing a particular military event or battle.

Status: SB 1 failed to be enacted. With only one exception, the Legislature has declined to enact any veterans license plate bill pertaining to a specific military event or battle [i.e. Pearl Harbor survivors].

★ February 21, 1992: The Council passed motions:

★ Opposing Governor Thompson's proposal to shift a \$500,000 Veterans Home GPR appropriation to the Veterans Trust Fund.

★ Opposing the use of VA hospitals by non-veterans until the VA hospital system accepts all veterans, service or non-service connected.

Status: The Governor's shift of Veterans Home funding took place, but the transfer was treated as a loan from the Veterans Trust Fund and subsequently repaid. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs backed off from its initial decision to admit non-veterans to VA hospitals.

★ March 20, 1992: The Council passed motions:

★ Opposing the \$4.2 million "Veterans Trust Fund Raid".

★ Supporting a budget adjustment bill amendment to repeal the income limits on the Part-Time Study Grant.

★ Pledging to bring the issue of supporting homeless veterans initiatives to member organizations state conventions.

★ Supporting H.R. 4278 and S. 2248, the "American Veterans Health Care Reform Act of 1992".

Status: The budget adjustment bill subsequently transformed the \$4.2 million "Veterans Trust Fund Raid" into a loan from the trust fund to the General Fund with a specified repayment date.

The repeal of the income limits on the Part-Time Study Grant failed in the budget adjustment bill conference committee.

There has been increased veterans community support for addressing the homeless veterans issue. The result has been to create a more positive climate which has maximized veteran organization support for efforts like the Veterans Assistance Program

There has been no substantive veterans health care reform at the federal level to date.

★ April 10, 1992: The Council passed a motion opposing H.R. 1300, the "Universal Health Care Act of 1991", because of its detrimental effect on federal health care delivery to veterans.

Status: H.R. 1300 was not enacted.

★ May 15, 1992: The Council passed motions:

★ Supporting an increase in the loan limits for the Veterans Business Loan Program and requiring that the department's loan should be subordinate to the required loan from the private sector.

★ Supporting an increase in Economic Assistance Loans and removing the requirement for a third party guarantor on such loans.

★ Status: The recommended changes to the Veterans Business Loan Program were not made [the program was eliminated in the current budget]. The Economic Assistance Loans maximum was increased to \$5000, but the third-party guarantor requirement remains.

★ June 19, 1992: The Council created a special committee to study the development of a state veterans cemetery in Wisconsin as opposed to attempting to have another national veterans cemetery established.

Status: In the current biennium's budget, a state veterans cemetery was established. The Council's special committee reports created a foundation for the development of the project.

★ September 25, 1992: The Council adopted a motion endorsing the Department's budget proposals for the next biennium.

Status: Most of the Department's requests and initiatives were included in the new biennial budget.

★ January 8, 1993: The Council adopted motions supporting a decrease in the number of Board and Council meetings commencing with 1993 and suggesting when those meetings should take place.

Status: The number of Board and Council meetings have been reduced from eleven a year to either six or seven depending on the demands on the two bodies. The effectiveness and efficiency of the Board and Council have been maintained while reducing the costs involved.

★ April 16, 1993: The Council passed a motion supporting the creation of a veterans target group within the JTPA program and adding veterans to state and local PICs.

Status: The recommended action was not taken.

★ October 15, 1993: The Council adopted a motion endorsing AB 601 which would restrict the proliferation of special license plates, including additional veterans plates.

Status: AB 601 passed the Assembly, but failed to be acted upon in the Senate.

★ November 19, 1993: The Council passed a motion endorsing those portions of AB 328 and SB 357 which relate to seating Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans on the Council on Veterans Programs.

Status: Both bills failed to be enacted. However, 1995 AB 41, which deals with

the same subject, has passed the Assembly and is expected to pass the Senate later this month.

★ January 21, 1994: The Council passed motions endorsing SB 333 [excluding spousal income when calculating income limits for the Part-Time Study Grant Program], SB 385 [requiring certain charitable organizations to file financial reports with the Department of Regulation & Licensing], AB 65 [permitting the placement of educational materials on vehicles which appear to be illegally parked in handicapped parking spaces], AB 329 [providing a sales tax exemption for sales to veterans organizations], AB 619 [The Veterans Trust Fund Bill], AB 776 [increasing the amount of veterans retraining grants] and AB 993 [providing a sales tax exemption for sales to veterans organizations].

Status: AB 619 and AB 776 passed. The other endorsed bills failed.

★ June 17, 1994: The Council unanimously adopted a motion reaffirming its unqualified support for Wisconsin's comprehensive veterans loan and grant programs in lieu of bonuses for wartime veterans. Additionally the Council urged legislative supporters of veterans bonuses to instead support adequate GPR contributions to the Veterans Trust Fund to ensure its viability. Specifically, the Council recommended transferring the administrative costs of veterans loan and grant programs from the trust fund to the general fund; and that the same be done with the operational costs of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

Status: Legislative supporters of bonuses decided not to introduce bonus legislation. Legislation has been drafted to shift the administrative costs of the department's loan and grant programs, but it has not yet been introduced. The Legislature in the course of the 1995-1997 budget process shifted the operational and administrative costs of the museum to the general fund, effective January 1, 1997.

★ August 12, 1994: The Council adopted motions:

★ Recommending that the Board approve the Department's proposed budget.

★ Endorsing the approval of the tuition and fee reimbursement rule proposed by the Department.

Status: The Board approved the Department's budget proposal for the 1995-1997 biennium [subsequently, most of the provisions of the proposal were included by the Legislature in the budget].

The tuition and fee reimbursement rule was adopted as proposed.

★ January 13, 1995: The Council passed a motion asking President Clinton to pardon the 258 people involved in the "Port Chicago Mutiny" and requesting that U.S. Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs directly intervene.

★ The Council gave its informal endorsement to the creation of a Veterans Assistance Program site at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.

★ The Council informally agreed that legislation providing for the addition of Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans to the Council should be introduced at the request of the Council.

Status: The White House referred the "Port Chicago Mutiny" pardon request to the President's pardon counsel who advised the Council that she could not proceed without a written request from those desiring the pardons. Secretary Brown declined to intervene.

The department opened a VAP site at King earlier this year.

AB 41 was introduced at the request of the Council. It subsequently passed the Assembly and is scheduled for Senate floor action during the current period.

★ April 21, 1995: The Council passed motions:

★ Endorsing legislation to permit the placement of educational materials on vehicles appearing to be illegally parked in handicapped parking spaces.

★ Endorsing AB 40 [paying interest on escrow accounts on loans made through the Veterans Mortgage Loan Program].

Status: AB 497 relating to handicapped parking has been introduced, has passed by the Assembly and is awaiting a hearing in the Senate.

AB 40 is awaiting executive action in the Assembly.

★ August 12, 1995: The Council defeated a motion endorsing the seating of the Veterans Education Committee on the Council.

Status: No legislation has been introduced to date on the subject.

Part D-Staff Services

1. Is there staff which assists your organization in carrying out its functions and responsibilities or otherwise provide services?

No.

2. If the answer to D1 is "No", is the effectiveness of your organization hampered by lack of staff?

The Council has no staff per se. However, Department of Veterans Affairs executive staff provides general support functions including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- ★ Typing Council meeting notices and agendas.
- ★ Making arrangements for meeting rooms and Council member accommodations.
- ★ Taking, preparing and distributing the minutes of Council meetings.
- ★ Providing limited, general secretarial support to the Council and Council chair on an as needed basis.
- ★ Performing routine liaison functions between the Council and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

What steps have been taken to address this problem?

Not applicable.

3. If the answer to D1 is "Yes", please make a separate list of the activities performed by the staff.

Not applicable.

4. Are there any written guidelines as to the specific activities or duties which are to be carried out directly by the membership and which are carried out by the staff?

Not applicable.

5. How many employees (total) comprise the staff that serves your organization?

The Council has no employees.

6. Please indicate who hires and supervises staff members.

Not applicable.

7. If your organization has an Executive Director, please provide two (2) copies of the position description.

The Council does not have an Executive Director.

Part E-Fiscal Information

1. Please indicate the total cost for carrying out the functions of your organization (including the staff that serves it) for each of the past two state fiscal years and the amount expected to be spent for this purpose in this state fiscal year. Please also indicate the source of the moneys and the appropriation.

	<u>FTE Salary & Fringe & Spent</u>	<u>Travel \$ Spent</u>	<u>Total \$ Amount Spent</u>	<u>Fund Sources</u>	<u>Final Chapter 20 Appropriation (if applicable) or Budgeted Amount</u>
FY 94 Actual	\$656	\$ 7,875	\$ 8,531	SEG	\$ 8,531
FY 95	\$690	\$10,334	\$11,024	SEG	\$11,024
FY 96	\$712	\$10,300	\$11,012	SEG & PR	\$11,012

2. Please provide a detailed breakdown of the actual cost for carrying out the functions of your organization (and the staff that serves it) during the last state fiscal year.

a. Cost of compensation (including expenses) paid to organization members.

<u>Food</u>	<u>Lodging</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Total</u>
			\$10,334

b. Cost of salaries/wages, fringe benefits and expenses paid to employees.

<u>Position #</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Fringes</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Total</u>
015100	\$509	\$831	\$ 0	\$690

c. Cost of out-of state travel for members and staff.

None.

d. Cost of membership dues to local and/or national organizations.

None.

e. Cost of leases, furniture, furnishings, equipment, office supplies, printing and postage.

Postage, copying and office supplies costs are very minimal and are absorbed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

f. Cost of private consultants or other contractual personnel.

None.

g. Other costs.

None.

3. Please indicate the total revenues to the state generated by the functioning of your organization during each of the past two state fiscal years.

The Council does not directly generate any revenues to the state.

4. Please indicate state grant and loan programs, if any, administered by your organization.

The Council does not directly administer any state grant or loan programs.

5. Please specify the effect, if any, of federal intervention or loss of federal funds or private gifts if your organization is terminated.

None are anticipated.

Part F-Miscellaneous Information

1. Have there been any audits, evaluations, management studies, functional studies or other evaluative activities conducted by anyone, including independent sources, of the functions and operations of your organization and/or the staff that serves it within the last five years?

No.

2. Does your organization issue directives, policies, guidelines, memoranda, newsletters, examinations, rules, information to licensees or any other information that is intended to inform, guide, regulate or otherwise affect the public or any portion of the public?

No.

If "no", please explain the absence of such information.

The actions and positions of the Council are reflected in the Council's minutes. The minutes are distributed to all Council and Board members, appropriate Department staff, all Board Committee members, all CVSOs, all state veterans commanders, the Governor, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the Legislative Council, the Department of Administration, interested legislators and members of the public who have requested them. Additionally, Council representatives are individually responsible for reporting Council activities, recommendations and actions to their respective organizations.

3. Please provide the names, addresses and telephone numbers of any state, regional or national organizations or agencies with which your organization has contact and/or common interests?

Obviously the Council and its members share a common interest with regard to veterans programs, benefits, welfare and policies with a wide array of national veterans organizations [i.e. almost all organizations represented on the Council are part of a national organization]. We also have common interests with:

★ Various state agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Industry, Labor & Human Relations; the Department of Education; the Division of Corrections and the University of Wisconsin and Vocational-Technical School systems.

★ The 72 Wisconsin County Veterans Service Officers and their statewide and regional associations.

★ The federal government including, but not limited to, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as the veterans employment and training portions of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The number of these organizations and agencies with whom we have common interests is very significant and we do not have the resources to comprehensively identify each of them individually and provide every possible name, address and telephone number. If there is more specific detail

that is necessary in order to complete your review of the Council, please advise the Council chair and we will provide any additional information as soon as we can.

4. Are there any other federal, state or local government entities which carry out any of the same or similar functions that are performed by your organization?

No.

5. Are there any private entities which carry out any of the same or similar functions that are performed by your organization?

Not at the state level. There are a limited number of counties that have allied veterans councils which are comprised of various veterans groups, although none of the local councils are as representative as the Council on Veterans Programs. These allied veterans councils' focus is normally local in nature and generally not coordinated with other allied veterans councils.

6. Please list any cooperative efforts between your organization and other public and private entities, including those listed above.

The primary objective of the Council is to bring Wisconsin's statutorily recognized veterans organizations together to work cooperatively in advising the Board of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs on matters of interest and concern to Wisconsin's veterans community. However, the Council also works directly with the Governor's office, the Senate and Assembly Veterans Affairs Committees, various members of the Legislature and state veterans organizations [whether or not represented on the Council], for the benefit of Wisconsin veterans.

7. Does your organization license, certify or permit applicants to conduct any regulated activities?

No.

Part G-Justification

1. What condition(s), situation(s) and/or problem(s) existed prior to the inception of your organization which directly led to its creation? How were these problems handled at the time? Please provide specific examples.

a. There was no Department of Veterans Affairs prior to the end of World War II. State government was not focused on the concerns and needs of veterans. Various state

agencies were responsible for generally providing for Wisconsin's veterans, although their efforts were essentially indirect in nature and not necessarily coordinated. Basically, direct state veterans benefits prior to World War II involved giving veterans bonuses upon their return and sending them on their way to fend for themselves.

b. There were already a substantial number of veterans from the Spanish-American War and World War I, in particular. However, World War II brought about the United States' greatest military mobilization and was destined to create a massive addition to the state's veterans population. The number of veterans organizations began to proliferate after the end of World War II. These organizations became more specialized in nature and generally attracted different constituencies. Their efforts were often not coordinated. However, they shared a common goal of helping make state government more responsive to the concerns and needs of veterans.

c. World War II's aftermath underscored the need to coordinate the reintegration of veterans into the general population and to facilitate that transition. There was no real governmental mechanism for doing so.

d. The magnitude of World War II and the return of a generation of veterans who had "saved the world for democracy," brought about a profound sense of gratitude on the part of the people of Wisconsin, in general. There was significant sentiment for honoring veterans and providing them with appropriate benefits to make some substantive payments on the state's and nation's "debt of gratitude."

2. Please indicate the extent to which the condition(s), situation(s) and/or problem(s) that led to the creation of your organization have changed since its inception.

a. The Wisconsin Legislature created the Veterans Recognition Board in 1943. In 1947, the Department of Veterans Affairs replaced the Veterans Recognition Board. The Board of Veterans Affairs was created at the same time to oversee the policy and operations of the new department, as well as to appoint the department's secretary.

b. In 1943, a statutory advisory committee to the Veterans Recognition Board was also established. When the Department of Veterans Affairs was created in 1947, the advisory committee was retained and mandated to advise the Board of Veterans Affairs. From time to time, new veterans organizations were added to the statutory advisory committee. In 1967, the Kellett Act, which reorganized existing state government, created the present Council on Veterans Programs and defined its present responsibilities of advising the Board of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs on solutions and policy alternatives relating to problems facing Wisconsin's veterans. From time to time, new veterans organizations have been added to the Council to make it more representative of the diverse veterans population of the state.

c. The creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs provided a specific agency with the responsibility of coordinating and facilitating the reintegration of returning veterans into the mainstream of Wisconsin society.

d. After World War II, some veterans organizations and some members of the Legislature recognized that the most appropriate way to honor Wisconsin's veterans was not with small, one-time bonuses, but with a benefit package. It was believed that such a package would be more meaningful to Wisconsin's veterans and especially those who were most in need. Additionally, the resulting loan and grant programs directly benefitted the state as a whole by ensuring that as many veterans as possible would be educated, employed, homeowners, etc.

3. Please indicate to what extent each of the condition(s), situation(s) and/or problem(s) specified in item G1 above have been alleviated by your organization? Please provide specific examples.

a. The partnership between the department, board and the Council [and its predecessor] has effectively focused Wisconsin government on the concerns and needs of veterans.

b. The Council [as did its predecessor] has very significantly contributed to coordination and unity of Wisconsin's veterans organizations.

c. For the last 52 years, the Council on Veterans Programs and its predecessor statutory advisory council, have played a significant on-going role in assisting the department and its board in fulfilling their missions.

d. The Council has identified the needs of veterans and identified programs which could best address those needs. In the process, the service of Wisconsin veterans was honored in a meaningful manner.

4. Is it likely that the condition(s), situation(s) and problem(s) described in reply to item G1 above will reoccur or worsen if your organization is terminated?

Yes.

Please explain your answer and provide specific examples.

The unity of the veterans community would be disrupted. It would become extremely difficult to identify common goals and objectives and then properly, effectively and efficiently address them. There would be a loss of direction in the Wisconsin veterans community. The state's veterans would lose a powerful and effective watchdog for the Veterans Trust Fund. Smaller, more specialized veterans organizations would essentially lose their voices. The ability for a wide range of veterans organizations to discuss, share

and disseminate information effectively and efficiently would be compromised.

5. Aside from the replies provided to items G1 and G2 above, what benefit(s) does the existence and functioning of your organization provide to the people of Wisconsin. Please provide specific examples.

The Council normally helps bring about a consensus within the veterans community concerning legislative and administrative matters that are of interest to Wisconsin veterans. That consensus facilitates the orderly promulgation of veterans-related rules and enactment of veterans legislation which, as a matter of public policy, serves the people of Wisconsin well by making government more efficient and effective.

6. What negative impacts to Wisconsin can be foreseen if your organization is terminated?

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs is a unique entity within state government. It is the only state department that has a citizen board that sets the department's policy and appoints its secretary. The seven person board is made up exclusively of veterans. However, board members are not required to be active members of any veterans organizations. Board members who are active in veterans organizations are expected to be generalists, representing the interests of all Wisconsin veterans.

The Council on Veterans Programs brings a unique perspective to both the Board and the Department and promotes unity within the Wisconsin veterans community. This unity translates into the efficient administration of the department and the Wisconsin Veterans Trust Fund [VTF]. The trust fund supports all Wisconsin veterans loan and grant programs, except for the first mortgage loan program. No GPR is appropriated on a regular basis to fund VTF programs. Instead, it is funded by loan proceeds from veterans loan programs.

If the Council were terminated, the primary negative impact on Wisconsin would be a lack of consensus on veterans issues among the state's veterans organizations resulting in uncoordinated legislative and administrative efforts. The Department would lose a critical source of input. And there would be the loss of an important Veterans Trust Fund watchdog who has helped maintain the financial integrity, stability and intent of the trust fund. If the trust fund is compromised, significant GPR dollars will be necessary to fund state veterans loan and grant programs.

7. If your organization is terminated, should its current functions, responsibilities and activities be terminated as well, or should they be transferred to another organization?

No, but it is very hard to imagine that any other entity could do a better or more cost-effective job than is being done now without expending any GPR funding.

8. If your organization is terminated, what legal obligations, pending matters, assets and liabilities would have to be considered?

None.

Would any current licenses, certifications or permits be affected?

No.

9. If your organization is continued, what changes would you like to see which would make it more efficient/effective? Please estimate any costs that would be incurred and cite legal (statutory) changes needed to accomplish your recommendations.

Some possible changes that would increase the efficiency/effectiveness of the Council might include:

★ Having the Council chair become a voting member of the Board of Veterans Affairs [or, in the alternative, have the Council nominate three of its members for a one year Board appointment to be made by the Governor from among those nominated]. This would require statutory authorization and would have a minimal fiscal impact. The precedence has already been set by having a student member serve on the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.

★ Statutorily require that the Council have a specific role in the selection of the Department's Secretary. Again, the fiscal costs would be minimal.

10. What is your recommendation as to whether or not your organization should be terminated.

The Council on Veterans Programs should **NOT** be terminated.

Please explain.

It is in the best interests of Wisconsin's veterans, the orderly and efficient operations of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and the Board of Veterans Affairs and the people of Wisconsin to maintain the Council on Veterans Programs. The responses set forth above describe an effective, efficient operation that fulfills an important purpose at no cost to Wisconsin taxpayers.

The Council gives veterans organizations a voice in our state government on matters that directly affect them and all Wisconsin veterans. Why would anyone want to silence that voice? Eliminating the Council would be a lessening of the democratic process and would be a loss not just for Wisconsin veterans, but for the State of Wisconsin as a whole.