



2019 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 4

1 **Relating to:** honoring the life and public service of Senator Walter John Chilsen.

2 Whereas, on December 25, 2018, Walter John Chilsen passed away at the age
3 of 95; and

4 Whereas, Chilsen served in the Wisconsin State Senate from 1967 to 1991,
5 representing the people of the 29th Senate District; and

6 Whereas, Chilsen was born in Merrill, Wisconsin, in 1923 to Margaret and
7 Walter Burt Chilsen; and

8 Whereas, during World War II, Chilsen enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, serving
9 as a bombardier on a B-24 bomber and climbing the ranks to lieutenant; and

10 Whereas, Chilsen was injured when his plane crashed into the ocean near
11 Saipan during the Battle of Iwo Jima; and

12 Whereas, Chilsen helped other crew members reach safety following the crash
13 and was later awarded the Purple Heart; and

14 Whereas, after the war, Chilsen attended Northwestern University and then
15 graduated from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. He then went on to

1 pursue a career in acting as well as in radio broadcasting at WLIN radio in Merrill;
2 and

3 Whereas, in 1954, Chilsen became the news director and anchor for WSAU-TV
4 — now known as WSAW-TV — when the station signed on the air as Wausau's first
5 television station; and

6 Whereas, over his 17-year career in radio and television broadcasting, Chilsen
7 became Central Wisconsin's most trusted and authoritative news voice and, in 2005,
8 he was inducted into the Wisconsin Broadcasting Museum's Hall of Fame; and

9 Whereas, during his 24 years in the Senate, Chilsen served on a variety of
10 committees and was recognized for his accomplishments on behalf of senior citizens,
11 agriculture and rural development, and environmental issues; and

12 Whereas, Chilsen was known in the legislature as a kind and thoughtful leader,
13 a skilled orator, and a consensus builder, and

14 Whereas, after retiring from the State Senate, Chilsen served on the board of
15 the town of Weston for 17 years before stepping down at the age of 94 in December
16 2017; and

17 Whereas, Chilsen and his wife of 65 years, Rose, were involved in many
18 volunteer activities and were instrumental in the founding of The Neighbors' Place,
19 a Wausau community center that provides food and other basic necessities for those
20 in need; and

21 Whereas, Chilsen's beloved wife Rose, who passed away on April 4, 2019,
22 exactly 100 days after her husband, saw to it that Chilsen was elected to the State
23 Senate for five terms; and

24 Whereas, Chilsen is survived by his eight children and several grandchildren
25 and great-grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

