



2025 SENATE BILL 254

May 9, 2025 - Introduced by Senators WIMBERGER, BRADLEY, CARPENTER, HABUSH SINYKIN, L. JOHNSON, PFAFF, WIRCH and RATCLIFF, cosponsored by Representatives KURTZ, DONOVAN, SINICKI, ANDERSON, BROWN, DESMIDT, DITTRICH, DOYLE, FRANKLIN, GOEBEN, GUNDRUM, B. JACOBSON, KNODL, KREIBICH, MCCARVILLE, MELOTIK, MOORE OMOKUNDE, MURSAU, NOVAK, O'CONNOR, PENTERMAN, PIWOWARCZYK, PRADO, SNODGRASS, SNYDER, STEFFEN, TENORIO, TUCKER and WICHGERS. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Veteran and Military Affairs.

- 1 **AN ACT** *to create* 20.485 (2) (a) and 45.75 (9) of the statutes; **relating to:**
- 2 funding for the War Memorial Center and making an appropriation.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, by agreement between the county board and any nonprofit private corporation, a county having a population of 750,000 or more may establish and maintain a memorial to commemorate the lives and deeds of persons who served the state or nation in war or other national service. Milwaukee County is the only county in the state with a population of 750,000 or more, and the county established and maintains a memorial called the War Memorial Center. This bill creates a continuing appropriation account for the Department of Veterans Affairs from which the War Memorial Center's memorial board may request DVA to provide funds to it for support of the memorial. In making a request for the funds, the memorial board is required to describe its intended use of the funds, and to aver that it has secured equal matching funds that it will contribute to its intended project supporting the War Memorial Center. In addition, in each fiscal year in which the War Memorial Center's memorial board receives funds from DVA as described under the bill, the War Memorial Center's memorial board is required to submit a report to the Joint Committee on Finance that describes how the funds were used and that indicates how much money remains in the appropriation account.

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For further information see the state and local fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 20.005 (3) (schedule) of the statutes: at the appropriate place, insert the following amounts for the purposes indicated:

	2025-26	2026-27
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20.485 Veterans affairs, department of

(2) LOANS AND AIDS TO VETERANS

(a) War memorials in populous

counties	GPR	C	9,000,000	-0-
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SECTION 2. 20.485 (2) (a) of the statutes is created to read:

20.485 (2) (a) *War memorials in populous counties.* As a continuing appropriation, the amounts in the schedule to support war memorials in populous counties as provided under s. 45.75 (9).

SECTION 3. 45.75 (9) of the statutes is created to read:

45.75 (9) (a) The memorial board may request from the department funds from the appropriation account under s. 20.485 (2) (a) for one or more purposes specified under par. (b). In a request for funds under this paragraph, the memorial board must include all of the following:

1. A description of the purpose for which the memorial board is requesting the funds and the memorial board's intended use of the requested funds.

2. A written averment from the memorial board that it has, or has a written financial commitment to receive, a full match of the amount of funds it is requesting

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1 from the department, which matching funds the memorial board will ensure are
2 used to meet at least half of the memorial board's total anticipated cost for the
3 purpose for which the memorial board is requesting funds.

4 (b) Funds requested under par. (a) may be used by a war memorial
5 established under sub. (1) for any of the following purposes:

6 1. Expenses relating to the operation of the war memorial, including
7 memorials, capital projects, exhibits, programs, salaries, and insurance.

8 2. Maintenance, repairs, development, construction, or improvements of the
9 war memorial's facilities, properties, or grounds or other property owned, operated,
10 or maintained by the war memorial.

11 (c) Within 60 days of a memorial board's request for funds under par. (a), the
12 department shall review the request and determine whether to fully or partially
13 approve the request, request more information from the memorial board, or deny
14 the request if the request does not meet the requirements under par. (a). Upon the
15 department's full or partial approval of a request made under this paragraph, the
16 department shall within 30 days provide to the war memorial the approved funds.
17 Upon the department's full or partial denial of a request made under this
18 paragraph, the memorial board may within 90 days request that the department
19 revisit and review its denial decision.

20 (d) By the end of each fiscal year in which a memorial board receives funds
21 from the department as the result of a request made under par. (a), the memorial
22 board shall submit a report to the joint committee on finance and to the chief clerk
23 of each house of the legislature for distribution under s. 13.172 (3) to the standing
24 committees having jurisdiction over veterans matters. The report shall describe

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1 how the memorial board used or plans to use the received funds and shall indicate
2 how much money remains in the appropriation account under s. 20.485 (2) (a).

3 SECTION 4. Effective date.

(1) This act takes effect the day after publication, or on the 2nd day after publication of the 2025 biennial budget act, whichever is later.

6 (END)