



TERRY MOULTON



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

23RD SENATE DISTRICT

From: Senator Terry Moulton

To: Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry

Re: **Testimony on Senate Bill 557**
Relating to: voluntary contributions to pay for hunting and fishing approvals for disabled veterans and making an appropriation.

Date: February 14, 2018

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for allowing me to testify today on Senate Bill 557, which would allow a person to donate money to hunting and fishing licenses for disabled veterans.

As you probably know, hunting and fishing can be a therapeutic activity for sportsmen and sportswomen. The quiet sounds of nature, the beauty and the wildlife all have a calming effect on people. A successful day of hunting and fishing not only can help with stress, but it is also a source of food that many families rely on it to supplement their grocery needs.

For veterans who have served our country, the benefits of hunting and fishing can have an even larger impact. Many veterans who come back from serving suffer from physical injuries or mental conditions like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Sometimes these conditions require vets to periodically remove themselves from their daily lives to heal. Hunting and fishing have become a popular activity for vets to take part in and that is why it is important to make the process easier.

Senate Bill 557 helps get veterans into the outdoors by allowing individuals to pay for disabled veterans' hunting and fishing tags and licenses. Specifically, this bill would allow any person to make a donation to the Department of Natural Resources to cover a portion or all of the hunting and fishing approvals for disabled veterans. This donation would apply to resident disabled veterans of the state.

This bill will help disabled veterans who might not be able to afford to get a license and allows them to get involved in a beneficial hobby. Allowing people to voluntarily donate to hunting and fishing approvals is also a great way to thank disabled veterans for their service.

Please recommend passage of Senate Bill 557 and allow people to support disabled veterans in a new way. Thank you again for allowing me to testify today.

Serving the 23rd Senate District

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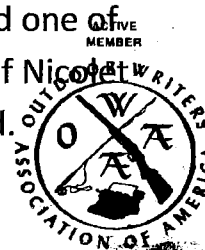


Testimony for AB 665 to Senate **Committee on Sporting Heritage,
Mining and Forestry** February 14, 2018

My name is Tim Eisele and I am a freelance outdoor writer and photographer living in Madison. I am testifying in favor of AB 665 that would allow people and organizations to donate money to pay for hunting and fishing licenses for disabled veterans.

First, I would like to let you know that I am testifying for myself but as a member of the Wisconsin Outdoor Communicators Association, and one of our members was instrumental in helping with this proposal. We are an organization of outdoor writers, broadcasters, editors, photographers and communicators who try to facilitate getting important information on natural resources to Wisconsin citizens, and I am pleased to have been one of the original founding members of WOCA, which was formed in 1976, and had the privilege of serving on its Board of Directors and as its president. This State has a unique and proud heritage of outdoor communications, through such people such as Gordon MacQuarrie, Jay Reed, Don Johnson, Aldo Leopold, and many others.

WOCA holds an annual meeting each year during August at Trees For Tomorrow in Eagle River and we have had legislators address us about natural resource issues. Some include Scott Gunderson - when he chaired this Assembly Committee, Representative Kleefisch, Senator Tiffany, and last July Representative Milroy, and I believe as a result of that contact between Rep. Milroy and one of our members, Art Barlow (Art Barlow worked with veterans on behalf of Nico Hinelander), is where this proposed legislation was spawned.



I firmly believe that veterans who have served this country deserve our thanks and those who are disabled and return home deserve **every bit of support** that we can give them. And we have heard time and again how being outdoors and participating in hunting and fishing are wholesome activities that can heal souls.

For many of us the time in a marsh at sunrise, being in a turkey woods sitting at the base of an oak tree and hearing nearby gobbling, or fly-fishing while slowly walking upstream in the moonlit evening as mayflies hatch, is our outdoor church and provides time to reflect and re-set our own priorities in life.

I have often heard from people who work with disabled and homeless veterans that, how being outdoors, able to walk in the woods and fish is helpful to clear their heads of the stress after returning from serving overseas.

One of our WOCA members, Tom Muench has worked 49 years at the Veteran's Hospital in Tomah as a mental health outpatient clinic counselor and he told me that 90% of his workload is with veterans suffering PTSD. His theory is that the more they can get outside and active in things like turkey hunting or fishing, the better it is for them to be positive. (Tom, by the way, said he was 5 years old and recalls that his father was listening to a football game on the radio when an announcer interrupted the broadcast to announce that Pearl Harbor had been attacked).

It seems that soliciting donations from citizens and organizations is a great way to fund this program and provides **just a little bit more that we can do** to help disabled veterans afford to be outdoors AND just may provide additional healing. I talked to another WOCA member, Jim Bishop in Spooner, and he said that his Am Vets Post 190 in Spooner is very interested in this bill and very much supports the concept. I believe that once people and organizations learn of the opportunity they will donate to the fund.

There are many benefits and few if any drawbacks to this proposed bill, and I hope you will support it. Thank you.