



JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Senate Bill 263 and Assembly Bill 249

August 8, 2019

Good morning, members of the committee, and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Senate Bill 263 and Assembly Bill 249, which I have authored with Speaker Robin Vos and a bipartisan group of legislators to create a uniform set of standards for making honorary designations of Wisconsin state highways and bridges.

As you may know, the state currently has more than 40 highways, bridges, and interchanges named in honor of individuals and groups worthy of recognition. Under this bill, we aim to create clearly defined standards for the legislature and the citizens as to how these structures can be named going forward, including requirements that the honoree must have provided extraordinary public service, a proven contribution to the public good, or outstanding service to the nation. In addition, the honoree must have a strong connection to the community in which the segment of highway or bridge is located and the designation must be supported by the community.

In keeping with current practice, the bill protects state taxpayer dollars by mandating that any signage or markers of designation shall be at no cost to the state. The bill also provides that any new designation cannot supersede an existing designation unless it can be proved that the original recognition was fraudulent or reflects negatively on the community.

The standards proposed in this bill are not meant to act as a roadblock to honorary designations, but rather as a clear, easy to understand set of guidelines that preserves the high honor when these designations are made.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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ROBIN J. VOS

SPEAKER OF THE WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

Testimony on Senate Bill 263
Senate Committee on Transportation, Veterans and Military Affairs
August 8, 2019

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 263 (SB 263). Every day, over 11,000 miles of state highway and 5,000 bridges are used by residents and visitors navigating our state. Over 40 of those passageways have been named in honor of individuals, veterans and other groups the legislature has deemed worthy of recognition; impressing upon travelers our state's values.

Due to the importance of this designation, the naming of a state highway or bridge should not be taken lightly. Those we honor today will remain for decades as a symbol of our state's pride and a reflection of our beliefs. Senator Petrowski, Representative Considine and I have introduced SB 263 in an effort to preserve the integrity of this tradition so citizens of our state, such as Staff Sergeant Busch, receive the recognition they deserve.

SB 263 contains a set of ten guidelines that will ensure those who have shown exceptional service and dedication while bringing pride and honor to our state receive this meaningful designation. The bill establishes qualifications for individuals, stating an honoree must provide extraordinary public service, a substantial and proven contribution to the public good or outstanding service to the nation through a specific event. The individual must have also received a state or federal award or recognition for their service as well as a continued recognition plan.

The bill goes further to state an honoree must have a strong connection to the community in which the highway is located as well as have received no opposition to this designation. The honoree will also have to have lived in the state of Wisconsin at the time of their death and must be deceased for more than 5 years. Finally, any bill brought forward must identify the segment of highway or bridge, be authored by the district's representative, and must be of no cost to the state. The bill does state that a designation cannot supersede an existing designation unless sources can prove the original recognition was fraudulent or reflects negatively on the community.

This bill will set a new standard to allow for us to recognize those who have dedicated their life to the service of their communities and our state. Please join me today in supporting Senate Bill 263 and preserving this high honor for generations.