



JAMES W. EDMING

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 87TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 424
Assembly Committee on Local Government
November 16, 2023

Committee members, thank you for allowing me to speak to you today in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 424. I appreciate Senator Testin working with me on this legislation.

This bill eliminates unnecessary red tape from the Department of Veterans Affairs' grant program for county veteran service offices. Under current law, for a county to be eligible for this grant their county veteran service officer (CVSO), if hired after April 15th of 2015, must have either taken a civil service examination for the position developed by the Bureau of Merit Recruitment and Selection at the Department of Administration or have been appointed under a civil service competitive examination procedure. However, this exam covers very little of the job duties that CVSOs perform and is just an unnecessary hurdle for counties to receive the county veteran service office grant. AB 424 simply eliminates this exam requirement.

This legislation is brought forward at the request of the County Veteran Service Officers Association of Wisconsin and has the support of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Senate has already approved the companion bill to AB 424 on a voice vote and I ask for your support of this proposal as well. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today.



PATRICK TESTIN

STATE SENATOR

Testimony for AB 424

Senator Pat Testin

Committee on Local Government

November 16, 2023

Chairman Novak and Committee Members,

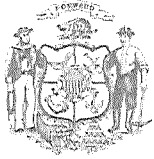
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 424, which will change the requirements for counties to receive grants for veterans services.

The County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin (CVSO) is an organization of professional veteran's advocates whose goal is to help veterans receive the benefits they deserve after their time in the armed service. These county employees, former service members themselves, have the important task of managing and coordinating the delivery of both federal and state benefits to local veterans, and have helped these men and women time and again in navigating the various resources that are available to them when they return home. For close to a century now, thousands of service members returning home to Wisconsin have received support from their counties through CVSOs, and it's the purpose of this bill to ensure this organization remains free of unnecessary requirements that could hinder their vital operation.

Assembly Bill 424 will remove unnecessary government red tape from the Department of Veterans Affairs' grant program for county veteran service offices. Currently, in order for a county to be eligible for this grant their veteran service officer, if chosen after April 15, 2015, must have taken a civil service examination for the position developed by the Bureau of Merit Recruitment and Selection in the Department of Administration or have been appointed under a civil service competitive examination procedure. However, this examination covers very little of what a county veteran service officer's job duties are and simply has no real purpose.

This bill eliminates the examination requirement, and instead just requires a county's veteran service officer chosen after April 15, 2015, to be a Wisconsin resident who served on active duty under honorable conditions in the U.S. armed forces or in forces incorporated as part of the U.S. armed forces, and meet certain other conditions. I worked closely with the County Veteran Service Officers Association of Wisconsin, who fully supports this common-sense proposal.

I am grateful my co-author, Rep. Edming, for his work on this legislation. Thank you for your time today, and thank you for your consideration of this bill.



ANDRÉ JACQUE

STATE SENATOR • 1ST SENATE DISTRICT

Phone: (608) 266-3512

Fax: (608) 282-3541

Sen.Jacque@legis.wi.gov

State Capitol • P.O. Box 7882

Madison, WI 53707-7882

Testimony before the Assembly Committee on Local Government

Senator André Jacque

November 16, 2023

Thank you Chairman Novak and Members for holding this public hearing on Assembly Bill 492. I regret that I am unable to testify in person, but please accept this written testimony.

AB 492 and its Senate companion, SB 624, address an inequity in current law requiring municipal solid waste facilities to meet proof of financial responsibility requirements that exceed those of privately-owned landfills and public utilities.

While municipal landfills currently must demonstrate that they have sufficient funds for closure, long-term care, and spill remediation in compliance with all laws and regulations, privately-owned landfills and electric cooperatives must only meet a “net worth test,” requiring just a certain level of net worth, liabilities to net worth ratio, and credit worthiness.

However, municipal landfills are held to a much higher financial standards – usually requiring the posting of a bond, depositing funds with the state, setting up an escrow account or line of credit - that are extremely costly to taxpayers and cumbersome for municipal facilities to administer.

Assembly Bill 492 puts municipal landfills on the same level as private landfills, affording municipalities the option available under federal law to demonstrate their financial fitness using the net worth method. This flexibility will free municipal taxpayers from bearing the burden of unnecessary costs associated with bonds, letters of credit, or escrow accounts, which are not borne by for-profit entities. Municipal budgets - and their taxpayers - are stretched thin as it is, and passing this legislation would make public resources available for other priorities.

Should a municipal landfill not meet the net worth test in subsequent years, other options, such as obtaining a letter of credit, would still be available to them under this bill. Further, Assembly Bill 492 also allows the DNR to pay costs from a segregated waste management account for activities associated with closure, spills or long-term care of a landfill.

Thank you for your consideration of Assembly Bill 492.

Chairman Novak, esteemed committee members

I am Bill Rosenau, the Waushara County Veterans Service Officer, and the current Chair of our State Association's Legislative Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of AB 424.

I will not take too much of your time today, as I know how loaded your schedules are.

I offer the CVSO Association of Wisconsin's support to this proposal.

AB 424 removes language tying an antiquated civil service examination to the extension of a Grant to CVSO offices from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs.

The removal of this language simply alleviates confusion surrounding the civil service examination and which CVSO's are eligible for that grant.

It is a common sense adjustment, which was proposed following collaboration with both the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and discussion with Jim Feldhausen with the Bureau of Merit Recruitment and Selection.

I would ask for this committee's support in what is in all actuality, simply a housekeeping measure.

I am subject to your questions.

2023 ASSEMBLY BILL 492

- Paul Klose – Manager, Mar-Oco Landfill, Crivitz - A partnership between Marinette and Oconto counties started in 1990.
- Two main goals:
 - 1) environmental protection (crack down on town dumps)
 - 2) reasonable municipal solid waste disposal costs for tax payers
- Assembly Bill 492 assists with goal #2
- While Mar-Oco currently operates in the black, the current financial responsibility system ties up a great deal of our “liquid” cash in Long Term Care so it affects day to day operations (explain cash build up).
- We currently invest money in CD’s for the long term care of the facility for after closure (currently @ \$2.1 million need \$4 million).
Cumbersome DNR paperwork to move money. To move a CD you need double the worth.
- We also need to have money (or a mechanism) in place to properly close the facility at any point in time. Mar-Oco Landfill utilizes a Letter of Credit for this.
- Letter of Credit for \$1.75 million estimated closure costs @1% costs \$17,500/year. (Over \$1/ton increase)
- If we assume no fee increase for the next 14 years X Letter of credit fee this cost is at nearly \$250,000. And exceed with increases.

- Based on correspondence I received, the DNR is concerned the municipally owned SW facilities would be lacking immediately accessible OFR funding. Their own system that is currently in place prevents us from having "immediately" accessible funds as discussed earlier with CD transfer. The funds will not be released from the department until any corrective measures are finished and approved. So we'll have to come up with the money on our own anyway & then get reimbursed. ALSO....

- Any facility with the bond ratings proposed in the draft legislation will have the means to obtain the funding needed to address any corrective action.

- Largest normal year cost of doing business expense is dealing with leachate. Second biggest cost is DNR fees. (almost \$13/ton) This bill is a good thing for responsible management of taxpayer dollars
