

Updated State Bill Listing - March 8, 2010

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On March 3, 2010, the State of Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) issued a bulletin to the state's 72 county veterans service officers (CVSOs) providing the location on the department's website of the agency's listing of bills of interest to veterans that have been introduced in the Wisconsin State Legislature in the current 2009-10 legislative session.

[CVSO Bulletin 921](#), "Accessing the most current information on State Legislative Bills of Interest to Veterans," also noted that updated information on individual bills in the listing could be accessed by clicking on the hyperlinked bill number.

However, WDVA's bill listing, located at www.WisVets.com/Legislation, shows that it has not been updated since December 17, 2009 to reflect the current status of the tracked bills. Additionally, it is missing many key bills of significance to veterans that have been introduced since then.

While serving as WDVA's chief legislative liaison, I received many requests from veterans organizations and advocates, legislators and staff, members of the media and others request information on bills introduced in the legislature of importance to veterans and the current status of those bills.

I created WDVA's online bill tracking tool to serve as a public resource and bill tracking tool that was readily available via the Internet at any hour of the day or night. For many years before I came to WDVA, the agency assisted in these requests because veterans organizations and advocates are key in getting veterans bills enacted into law, so I find it personally disappointing that the agency does not appear to intend to continue updating this legislative tool. I find it especially so since this is not a difficult task for WDVA to perform, yet it is of great value to the state's veterans service organizations and veterans advocates.

At the request of DAV's leadership, here is an updated listing of veteran-related bills that have not been included in WDVA's online bill tracker:

[AB 702](#) (Rep. Dexter), which would provide a long-awaited fix to WDVA's VetEd tuition reimbursement program, authorizing partial tuition reimbursement up to the 11 credit level for students who take more than 11 credits in a semester.

[AB 727](#) (Rep. Soletski), which creates a new fee of \$25 for filing documents with a County Register of Deeds, regardless of the number of pages. It is unclear whether the new \$25 filing fee would apply to veterans filing a copy of their DD Form 214 military discharge papers.

[AB 729](#) (Rep. Clark), related to home mortgage loan foreclosures, including those made by WDVA.

[AB 752](#) (Rep. Sinicki), which would create regional "representation" on the Board of Veterans Affairs by dividing the state into seven equally populated regions, and directing that the seven Board members come, one each, from the seven regions.

[AB 765](#) (Rep. Fields), which creates new licensing requirements for mortgage bankers, mortgage brokers, and mortgage loan originators. The bill eliminates the current law exceptions that expressly exclude WDVA when administering its veterans housing loan program, from being considered a mortgage banker or mortgage broker and that exclude its employees from being considered mortgage loan originators.

[AB 781](#) (Rep. Hilgenberg), which would provide a partial fix to the administrative cuts by UW System to the Wisconsin G.I. Bill tuition remission program. The bill has been the topic of substantial public discussion, including the issuance of a position paper by the Wisconsin County Veterans Service Officers Association and several major news stories.

[AB 810](#) (Rep. Shilling), which would create a privilege for communication of a veteran mentor participating in an alternative Veterans Court program.

[AB 813](#) (Rep. Sinicki), which would allow recipients of the Purple Heart who also hold a disabled license plate to receive a Purple Heart emblem for their disabled plate.

[SB 213](#) (Sen. Kreitlow), relating to: notification of alternative dispute resolution in foreclosure actions. WDVA operates a state veterans home mortgage loan program that would likely also be subject to these provisions.

[SB 426](#) (Sen. Kreitlow), which has a significant impact on records provided to requesters under the State's Open Records law, including those maintained by WDVA. This bill would require records to be inspected and provided in the same format in which the original record is kept.

[SB 444](#) (Sen. Hansen), which would extend the period for claiming a state income tax refund beyond the current four-year limit for individuals who can provide a statement from their physician that a physical or mental disability prevented the filing of their taxes in a more timely manner.

[SB 454](#) (Sen. Vinehout), which would create a special deer hunting season for military service members who were outside the state on active military duty during the regular deer hunting season.

[SB 470](#) (Sen. Carpenter), which would create a dementia specialist certification program. Both Wisconsin Veterans Homes (Union Grove, King), have significant numbers of residents suffering from dementia.

[SB 490](#) (Law Revision Committee), related to disability license plates for leased vehicles.

[SB 494](#), (Law Revision Committee), which would allow non-profit organizations to operate county Aging and Disability Resource Centers. ADRC's have been a hot button issue in some parts of Wisconsin where county veterans service officers and staffs have been incorporated into ADRC's.

[SB 507](#) (Sen. Erpenbach), which creates a new fee of \$25 for filing documents with a County Register of Deeds, regardless of the number of pages. It is unclear whether the new \$25 filing fee would apply to veterans filing a copy of their DD Form 214 military discharge papers.

[SB 537](#) (Sen. Robson), which would expand the number of annual events for which veterans and other non-profit organizations may obtain temporary alcohol sales permits. Interested veterans organizations should review the full [bill summary](#).

[SB 538](#) (Sen. Carpenter), which would require nursing homes in the state to provide written notice to residents if the home receives a Class "A" federal violation or a federal statement of deficiency that indicates a finding of immediate jeopardy. Substantial fines would be

imposed for failing to comply. WDVA operates a number of separately licensed nursing homes on the King and Union Grove campuses.

[SB 543](#) (Sen. Plale), which would allow recipients of the Purple Heart who also hold a disabled license plate to receive a Purple Heart emblem for their disabled plate.

[SB 578](#) (Sen. Kreitlow), which would add a representative of the Blinded Veterans Association of Wisconsin to the State of Wisconsin Council on Veterans Programs.