



Date: March 12, 2013

To: Members of the Committee on Transportation

From: Representative Petryk

Re: Assembly Bill 56

Good morning Chairman Ripp and members of the Committee. I appreciate having this opportunity to come before you today to testify in favor of Assembly Bill (AB) 56, the indication of veteran status on a state issued driver's license or identification card.

There are many other states that have already introduced and passed similar legislation to distinguish the card holder as a veteran. Since the introduction of this legislation in the 2011 session, I have heard from many veterans across Wisconsin who support this bill and would appreciate having indication of their service on their state issued driver's license or identification card.

AB 56 is a simple change to our state's driver's license and state identification cards which will make the day to day life for a veteran a little bit easier. With this indication on their card, the veteran would no longer have to carry with them their issued DD-214. For those of you who do not know, a DD-214 is issued by the Defense Department and identifies the veteran's condition of discharge (honorable, general, other than honorable, etc...). A DD-214 is useful to a veteran as it proves they are a veteran so that they may obtain veterans benefits, retirement, employment, and membership in veteran's organizations. With the veteran's status indication on a state issued driver's license or state identification card, a veteran will be able to obtain these benefits without having to carry sensitive documentation with them at all times.

Also, in case of an emergent situation, emergency personnel would know immediately when the victim is a veteran. If medical records were needed, they would know where the records could be located. Also, if a driver were pulled over by police, they would immediately be aware that the veteran could have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or other issues related to their service and the police will be better prepared to handle the situation in a manner that is appropriate and effective for the veteran.

The fiscal estimate prepared by the Department of Transportation (DOT) for this legislation indicates there could be five rating codes to identify a veteran or a disabled

veteran. The five identifiers could be Veteran; Disabled Veteran; Disabled Veteran Tier 1; Disabled Veteran Tier 2; and Disabled Veteran Tier 3. The DOT's estimated cost for implementation of this legislation ranges from \$417,346 to \$666,211 and the DOT believes that this increased cost could be absorbed within the agency's budget.

This legislation has bipartisan co-sponsor support as well as the support of Governor Walker this session. Also, the Council on Veterans Programs, which is comprised of 26 Veterans Service Organizations, the only Veterans Service Organizations that are statutorily recognized, met on February 21<sup>st</sup> and discussed Assembly 56. The Council agreed, as a body, to fully support this legislation. I ask today for your support as well and I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.



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# PAUL TITTL

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 25<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

March 12, 2013

First of all, I would like to thank you, Chairman Ripp, and all of the other committee members for allowing me to testify on AB 56. This bill allows an applicant for a motor vehicle operator's license or identification card issued by the Department of Transportation to indicate whether he or she is a veteran and to have that status indicated on the license or card.

- I am pleased to co-sponsor this bill. It's a way to honor our veterans.
- It's also good for our veterans.
- Businesses throughout Wisconsin and the United States, including restaurants, hotels and even home improvement stores give discounts to veterans. Some of those businesses require proof of veteran status.
- The veteran designation on a driver's license or identification card allows veterans quickly to verify their veteran status, eliminating the need to carry official military papers for these purposes.
- Because official military papers contain sensitive personal information, the loss or theft of those papers could lead to identity theft. This bill helps to lessen that risk.
- In some cases, this bill could possibly save lives.
- We have all heard reports about veterans returning from war zones in Iraq or Afghanistan suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and emotional scars from battle.
- Law enforcement officers have indicated that in some cases knowing a person's veteran status during a routine traffic stop might help to diffuse dangerous situations.
- For example, a person driving recklessly may have some additional issues taking place, and knowing the person is a veteran might alert the officer to begin asking questions that might help diffuse the tension.
- Finally, our veterans have given us so much. We are sitting in this room freely today because of what they have done. Making this change is a small but significant way of recognizing what they have done and how grateful we are for their service to our country.

Thank you for your time and attention.



**Joe Leibham**

STATE SENATOR

March 12, 2013

Dear Chairman Ripp and Members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation,

Thank you for holding this hearing today and for providing me the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 56.

The state of Wisconsin provides quality benefits and programs to our citizens and their families who serve in our military. For this, we can take great pride.

AB 56 will make everyday life a little easier for Wisconsin veterans. Under existing law, veterans without a current Military or Veteran Identification Card may be required to present additional paperwork to prove eligibility for certain benefits, such as sporting licenses or retail discounts. Adding the "Veteran" designation to the Wisconsin driver's license will consolidate several necessary forms into one simple label. Also, under this bill, disabled veterans will have an option to request a "Disabled Veteran" status be placed on their driver's license.

In addition to providing a simple convenience, this designation option relieves a Veteran from having to carry his or her DD-214 discharge papers for the purpose of validating veteran status for sporting license applications or retail discounts. Given that a DD-214 contains a host of sensitive information, this bill reduces the likelihood that these papers fall into the wrong hands due to misplacement or theft.

Finally, there will be no additional cost to a Veteran to receive this indication when he or she applies for a driver's license.

In our continuing effort to show our appreciation to our citizens who serve, I encourage you to support AB 56.

Thank you for considering my testimony today.

Sincerely,

**Joe Leibham**  
*State Senator*  
*9<sup>th</sup> Senate District*

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