



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Testimony on Assembly Bills 98 & 99 March 31, 2015

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of both Assembly Bill 98 and Assembly Bill 99.

Wisconsin law requires that the Department of Transportation identify on its state highway maps the location of certain veterans memorials and other veteran-related sites. In addition to sites like the Wisconsin Veterans Museum here in Madison and Milwaukee County Memorial Center, the maps list the locations of memorials in smaller communities, including the Memorial Park in Arcadia, the All Veterans Memorial in Clear Lake, and the Highground Veterans Memorial Park outside Neillsville. The statutory list also includes the Wisconsin Veterans Homes at King and Union Grove.

AB 98 would add the Wisconsin Veterans Tribute and Citizen Soldier Monument in Cadott, east of Chippewa Falls, to the list. The Tribute is prominently located at the intersection of State Highways 27 and 29. From a simple marker erected in 1991 on behalf of the citizens of Chippewa County, the Tribute has expanded over the years to include additional markers, over eighty flags, cannons, a tank, and a helicopter, among other sights. The Tribute also includes a monument established in the wake of 9/11 that honors America's citizen soldiers – our firefighters, law enforcement officers, and EMTs.

AB 99 would add the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls to the list. The home opened in 2013 and should join the King and Union Grove facilities on the statutory list.

This legislation was suggested to me by my constituent former State Sen. Dave Zien, himself a veteran and longtime advocate for veterans issues.

As you may know, the Wisconsin DOT recently issued its 2015 state highway maps. While the new maps include the Cadott and Chippewa Falls sites at the request of several legislators and other stakeholders, the department has indicated its preference that such decisions be backed by statutory authority.

I respectfully ask that the committee recommend both AB 98 and AB 99 for passage. Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.