



JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

SB 99: Designating and Marking the Richard A. Grobschmidt Memorial Bridge

Testimony of State Representative Jessie Rodriguez

Assembly Committee on Transportation

August 29, 2017

Good morning,

Committee Chairman Ripp and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 99, legislation that will allow for the creation of the Richard A. Grobschmidt Memorial Bridge.

Former Senator and Representative Richard Grobschmidt, known fondly by friends and family as Rick, was a lifelong resident of South Milwaukee, and a devoted educator and public servant.

Rick graduated from South Milwaukee High School in 1966, and returned to his alma mater to teach civics after earning his bachelor's degree from UW-Oshkosh. In 1985, he was elected state representative, serving five terms in the Assembly and then three terms as a state Senator. His impressive career culminated with his role as the Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction. Sadly, Rick passed away last year after a hard-fought battle with cancer. But his legacy lives on and will be properly honored with passage of this legislation.

Although we come from opposite ends of the political spectrum Rick and I share a similar passion for education.

During his time in the legislature, Rick was revered by his colleagues for his tremendous work ethic often referred to as a workhouse passing legislation but never seeking headlines. He dedicated much of his time to improving education for children in my district and throughout the state as a legislator and Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction respectively. In the legislature, he chaired



JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

the education committee in the Assembly and also the Senate. Among his long list of achievements, Rick established a school-to-work apprenticeship program and authored the law requiring school buses to have mechanical stop signs to ensure student safety when boarding the school bus. And students around the state are able to attend any public school through the successful open enrollment program that Rick helped champion.

Although he was never one to brag, Rick's distinguished career included many other accomplishments outside of education including the expansion of Interstate 794 and working on issues related to technology, libraries and child welfare to name a few.

Without any cost to the state, the legislation before you will authorize the Department of Natural Resources to erect signage designating a bridge in honor of Rick, with both the construction and maintenance paid through private donations. The newly named bridge stretches along the Hank Aaron State Trail connecting Lakeshore State Park to the mainland. The bridge will serve as a reminder of Rick's noble dedication to public service and his community; an honor that is well deserved.

I encourage your support for this legislation. Thank you for your time.

Alberta Darling

Wisconsin State Senator

Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

Richard A. Grobschmidt Memorial Bridge

Testimony on Senate Bill 99

Assembly Committee on Transportation

August 29, 2017

Thank you Chair Ripp and members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation for hearing this bill. Senate Bill 99 directs the Department of Natural Resources to designate the bridge on the Hank Aaron State Trail, which connects to the Lakeshore State Park Inlet as the "Richard A. Grobschmidt Memorial Bridge."

Richard A. Grobschmidt, a former Wisconsin State Representative, and State Senator passed away in July 2016.

Senator Grobschmidt was a dedicated teacher and legislator. During his political career, Senator Grobschmidt served on the Education Committee, where he worked tirelessly on behalf of children across the state. He also championed legislation on school bus safety, created apprenticeship programs, and advocated for the formation of Lakeshore Park. Upon leaving the legislature, Senator Grobschmidt served as Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Earlier this year, the Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly unanimously passed Senate Joint Resolution 17 commemorating the life and public service of Senator Grobschmidt. During this bill's reading, many of our colleagues spoke highly of Senator Grobschmidt's character. He was well-respected and known for establishing genuine relationships with members on both sides of the aisle.

The Wisconsin Legislature has designated more than 40 highways and bridges to commemorate groups and individuals. Naming this bridge in honor of the late Senator Grobschmidt recognizes his successful efforts to champion the formation of Lakeshore Park. I would like to thank my colleagues, Senator Larson and Representative Rodriguez, for their work on this issue. Again, thank you to the committee for taking the time to hear this bill, and I urge your support of SB 99.

Date: August 29, 2017
To: Assembly Committee on Transportation
From: Tony Evers, State Superintendent
Subject: Support for SB 99

I would like to thank the Committee for hearing Senate Bill 99 today and the authors of the bill for their work to honor Senator Grobschmidt's life of public service and contributions to Wisconsin. Senator Grobschmidt was a dedicated teacher, legislator and later served as an Assistant State Superintendent at the Department of Public Instruction.

Senator Grobschmidt served as an Assistant State Superintendent for two State Superintendents from 2003 through 2010. A profoundly dedicated public servant, he was a consummate gentleman at all times, and he maintained an optimistic demeanor throughout each day no matter the challenges he faced. In addition to his many duties at DPI, Rick served as the state's head Librarian and was also a "proud Rocket" from South Milwaukee.

He worked well with whomever he came in contact with and always found time to assist those in need or tell good story at the end of the day. Again, thank you to the committee for taking the time to hear this bill, and I urge your support of it.