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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23, 2015

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Rep. Steffen Authors Wisconsin's Stolen Valor Bill

Legislation Aims to Penalize Individuals Seeking to Make Gains through Military Impersonation

Madison- State Representative David Steffen (R-Howard) has authored legislation that would make it illegal to falsely claim military service, awards or honors in order to obtain benefits. Rep. Steffen has been working alongside State Senator Roger Roth (R-Appleton) to construct this bill and recently released it to the Legislature to garner co-sponsorship support.

Falsely claiming military service and honors to gain benefit, a crime more commonly known as Stolen Valor, is an ongoing issue. Stolen Valor has already earned federal-level attention, but has shown to be an issue better addressed at the state-level. At least 15 other states have already enacted some form of Stolen Valor legislation to compliment the federal Stolen Valor Act of 2013.

“This bill is about protecting the valor of those who rightly deserve it, our nation’s servicemen and women. Any individual who lies about military service for his or her own personal gain shows a complete disregard for the sacrifices made by our military men and women. Thanks to the help of a concerned constituent, I was made aware that federal-level legislation may not be enough to address this crime. Senator Roth and myself worked to draft Wisconsin’s Stolen Valor law which will allow our state to prosecute these cases,” Rep. Steffen commented.

Individuals in Wisconsin convicted of committing Stolen Valor would be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. However, if the false claim was intended to aid in another crime, an individual could face a Class H felony charge.

Stolen Valor legislation will be Rep. Steffen’s first bill as a State Representative.

“Authoring Wisconsin’s Stolen Valor bill became a top priority for me after I learned of the need for state-level authority over this crime. I am honored to be a leader on this important issue,” said Rep. Steffen.

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