



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
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STEPPING UP TO THANK OUR VETERANS

Since the beginning of the Iraqi war in March of 2003, over 40 Wisconsin residents located in Afghanistan and Iraq have died protecting our country. For many of us, these were our sons and daughters, moms and dads, friends and neighbors. Those who have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom have forever earned the respect from citizens around the world, and although the debt of their service cannot be repaid, steps are being taken toward fully honoring their sacrifice.

Late last month Gov. Jim Doyle signed the Wisconsin state budget into law. Although there were areas where the Republicans and Democrats disagreed, both parties believed that the state must remain committed to our veterans, and therefore provide extensive benefits to those coming home from war.

One of the biggest concerns from service men and women returning home is whether they can afford a great education. With the new budget, more veterans, or the spouses and children of deceased veterans, will have their higher education tuition covered by the state.

Other areas that will aid Wisconsin veterans is health care and housing. Almost 120 new positions will be added to the veteran's facilities of Union Grove and King to increase nursing and direct care coverage. The budget also sets aside \$234,000 for grants to support housing for homeless veterans and their families.

The majority of programs and services offered to our veterans are paid for by the Veteran's Trust Fund. With the passing of our state budget into law, Wisconsin now has the most comprehensive veteran's program in the nation.

I am very proud of the steps we are taking as a state to improve the benefits of veterans returning to Wisconsin. I believe the best way to say thank you to our service men and women is to commit to their well-being when they are home, just as they have committed to ours when they are not.

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