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February 28, 2012

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Public Safety, and Urban Affairs
From: Senator Glenn Grothman
Re: Senate Bill 476

I am in favor of Senate Bill 476 which will change the date of Fire Prevention Week from the week of October 8th to the week of October 9th. This bill is at the request of my constituent, Ronald Naab, who is the Past President of Badger Firefighters Association and the Director of Wisconsin State Firefighters Memorial, Inc. Ronald has been working diligently on this bill for many years and the passage of this legislation would be very meaningful for him and other firefighters throughout the state.

Under current law, Wisconsin observes Fire Prevention Week during the week that contains October 8th. The National Fire Protection Association observes fire prevention week during the week that contains October 9th, the date when most of the damage in Peshtigo and Chicago, two of the most disastrous fires in America's history, occurred

The reason for this change is there are some years that October 8th and October 9th are not in the same week. This means that fire departments are not able to utilize the promotion and training materials that are made available from the National Fire Protection Association since the dates on the national materials are different from the dates Wisconsin observes Fire Prevention Week.

This is a simple, commonsense bill that will not only clarify the observance of this week, but will also be beneficial to fire departments throughout the state of Wisconsin.

Ronald J. Naab

Badger Firefighters Association Past President

Wisconsin State Firefighters Memorial, Inc. Director

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27 February 2012

Today, your committee is considering a bill [SB 476] that is a significant influence on two important dates to the Wisconsin Fire Service. As a director of Wisconsin State Firefighters Memorial, I ask you to vote in the affirmative for this legislation.

The Wisconsin State Firefighters Memorial, Inc. was started in 1995 with a mission to create a memorial in Wisconsin Rapids as a special place to honor the brothers and sisters as members of the fire and rescue services in Wisconsin which made the Ultimate Sacrifice, their lives, while protecting lives and property. In addition this memorial allows families, communities, associations and/or fire departments honor those individuals that have devoted their time and skills to help others when they can no longer help themselves.

In 2004, the state of Wisconsin created a special day to honor these individuals that have passed away with the Wisconsin Firefighters Memorial Day. The date set for this observance was the Saturday leading into Fire Prevention Week. We later discovered that this day coincides with the National Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Day. This is a very important day for the families and fire departments that survive those individuals that died performing their duties serve our communities. As a result of the Wisconsin Firefighters Memorial Day puts us in conflict with the NFFF day. This creates a very uncomfortable situation for our survivors as to which event they should attend. We are asking to have the date for our state official day be changed to that of the Saturday ending Fire Prevention Week.

This observance in Emmetsburg, Maryland is very helpful to those that are allowed to attend. There are 3 solid days of grieving and mourning counseling along with bonding with other survivors.

The other important date we ask you consider changing is that week of Fire Prevention Week. This week is to coincide with the date of the two most disastrous fires in America's history—the great Chicago Fire and the Peshtigo Fire. These two fires started on the same day in the same year, October 9th. At present the state of Wisconsin by law observes Fire Prevention Week the week containing October 8th. This normally is not a conflict with the nationally observed week, which contains October 9th. We ask that

Peshtigo started Oct. 8

you vote in favor of moving our week to include October 9th. This change will allow our fire departments to use the promotion and training material made available, often at no charge or reduced price from the National Fire Protection Association.

Neither of these bills will have a financial impact on our local and state governments. We hope that this committee will vote in favor of this bill and allowed this bill to proceed to the floor for a vote. The Wisconsin State Firefighters Memorial has made plans to move our Final Alarm Ceremony and Procession to the 13th of October this year to stop our conflict with the NFFF Association.