



---

# GARY ALAN HEBL

---

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
May 23, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:  
Rep. Gary Hebl, (608) 266-7678

### **Honoring the Sacrifices of Fallen Soldiers By Taking Care of Those Still With Us**

*By Rep. Gary Hebl*

On Memorial Day, we remember and honor those we have lost fighting for our country. We gather with those close to us to celebrate family and friends who died while serving the United States and defending the freedom we hold so dear.

It's important that we have a day to pay tribute to those brave individuals. I believe we should honor their sacrifice by ensuring that we take care of their brothers and sisters in arms who return home with new obstacles and challenges involved in the often difficult transition back to civilian life.

We in the Legislature should make it a priority to assist returning veterans when they come home, whether that is helping them search for jobs, find housing, receive adequate health care, or pass other legislation aimed at aiding them.

We did address some issues this past session, such as passing 2017 Wisconsin Act 195, a bill that I co-sponsored. Act 195 created the Hire Heroes program, which will provide transitional jobs to veterans. However, there is still more work to be done. There were many bills introduced over the past year and a half that the majority party did not see fit to hold a vote on that would have a strong impact on veterans' lives and, I believe, honor the brave individuals who put their lives on the line for this country. Below are just some of the bills that were introduced this session but never received a full vote by the legislature:

- **Assembly Bill 62** would allow state-employed veterans who served in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other more recent military conflicts to count that service towards their Wisconsin Retirement System account. Currently, only service in pre-1974 conflicts can be counted towards retirement. AB62 would create a more equitable system, and allow all veterans to take advantage.
- **Assembly Bill 591** would create a toll-free number to call to report mismanagement, abuse, or neglect at state veterans homes, which could lead to investigations into those establishments.
- **Assembly Bill 593** would increase wages for employees who are employed at state veterans' homes. The intention is that, with adequate pay, state veterans homes can hire

and retain the best employees to take care of veterans. Assembly Bill 593, along with AB591 and AB62, were all referred to the Assembly Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, where Chairman Ken Skowronski (R-Franklin) refused to give any of the three a public hearing or a vote.

- **Senate Bill 631** would provide needy veterans and eligible family members with health care aid related to mental illness or treatment for substance abuse. Currently, they can only get aid for dental, vision, and hearing care. SB631 would expand that to help veterans get help in other crucial areas.
- **Senate Bill 818** would create grants to pave the way for a text message-based hotline for veterans in crisis. Both SB631 and SB818 did not receive a hearing in the Senate Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs.

These are just some of the many ways we can honor the men and women that put themselves in harm's way for us. I will continue to work with constituents, veterans, and my legislative colleagues to ensure our men and women returning from combat receive the best support the state of Wisconsin can give them.

Please, remember that Memorial Day is not just a three-day weekend. There is a reason that we have that Monday off, and I urge all of you to take a moment to reflect on the soldiers that have died in service of their country.

I wish everyone a safe and happy Memorial Day.

*Rep. Gary Hebl represents the 46<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, which includes the Cities of Sun Prairie and Stoughton, the Village of Cottage Grove, and the Townships of Cottage Grove, Dunkirk, Pleasant Springs, and Sun Prairie.*

*Contact Rep. Hebl with any questions or concerns you may have at (608) 266-7678 or via email at [Rep.Hebl@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Hebl@legis.wi.gov).*

**-END-**