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## **Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 91** *Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities* June 8, 2023

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for holding this public hearing today and allowing me to speak to you in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 91. This proposal is a reintroduction of 2021 AB 38 that unanimously passed through this committee last session.

As our brave men and women in the armed forces transition from the military back into civilian life, many look to continue their education at one of our state's outstanding public universities or technical colleges. AB 91 reduces the financial burden on these folks by waiving the application fee charged by these institutions. While the cost of a college application fee may not seem like a big deal, for a veteran or service member struggling financially, it could be what keeps them from applying to the educational institution they really want to attend or from applying for college at all.

While some institutions are currently waiving application fees in an effort to increase enrollment, this may not always be the case. Of the public technical colleges and universities charging application fees at this time, most are in the \$25-\$30 range. Our state's flagship university, UW-Madison, is a bit higher at \$60. If a veteran or service member can only afford to apply at one or two schools they will likely choose to apply to schools where they are more likely to be admitted. If a veteran or service member really wants to continue their education at a school with a lower acceptance rate like UW-Madison, their financial situation should not prevent them from attempting to gain admittance to our state's flagship university. Nor should they have to limit the number of schools they apply to because of fees.

AB 91 says thank you to those who have served our nation by removing a financial barrier for veterans and service members who want to continue their education at one of our state's public colleges and universities. An added benefit of this proposal is that by encouraging veterans to attend college in Wisconsin, it increases the likelihood that they stay in our state and become part of our workforce when they complete their education.

Mr. Chairman and members, I ask for your support of this legislation and thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today.