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A Promise is a Promise

The Legislature must pass the bill to fund the UW POW/MIA Recovery and Identification Project

(MADISON)—Today, Senator Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) issued the following statement in honor of National POW/MIA Recognition Day, highlighting the legislature’s missed opportunities to give back to the service personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and their families:

“Today is National POW/MIA Recognition Day, when we honor and remember our service members who never made it home. We must think of the thousands of families who still don’t know where their loved ones are after decades. More than 80,000 American service personnel are still missing, and approximately 1,500 of them are our fellow Wisconsinites. My deepest sympathies go to their families and friends, who still wait to learn about the fate of these heroes.

“The University of Wisconsin-Madison started the MIA Recovery and Identification Project to identify and return these service members’ remains and to bring closure to their families. They also highlight the contributions of veterans and bring attention to the tens of thousands who never came home.

“We have had several opportunities to provide support to this program. A proposal, which was originally introduced in a 2019 bill, would have provided \$360,000 to the project over two years. Despite receiving unanimous support in both chambers of the legislature, the legislature has failed to get the bill across the finish line after two sessions.

“In 2021, Governor Evers added this funding to his biennial budget proposal, but Republicans on the Joint Finance Committee took this funding out and passed the budget without it. I made my objection to removing this funding clear when I proposed an amendment to restore the funds. My Republican colleagues gave me assurances that the Legislature would pass it as a standalone bill at a later date. Unfortunately, this promise was broken. While the bill gained unanimous support in the State Senate, the Assembly never took it up before Republican leaders adjourned the session only three months into 2022.

“Families of POW and MIA service members want to know what happened to their loved ones, and the Recovery and Identification Project provides an invaluable service through their work to achieve that goal. On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, a perfect way to recognize those who gave their lives and their freedom for ours is to provide this funding to the UW MIA Recovery and Identification Project.

“These men and women didn’t give up on our country, and we must not give up on them either!”

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