



ROBERT W. WIRCH

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

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Contact: Senator Bob Wirch
(608)267-8979

Arguments Heard on Bipartisan Veterans Bill *Would Establish Hmong Veteran Status*

Madison, WI – Today, Senator Wirch (D-Pleasant Prairie) and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Veterans, and Military Affairs met to hear arguments on 2025 Senate Bill 2, which would expand veterans benefits for Hmong people who fought in support of the United States during the Vietnam War.

The bill, introduced by a bipartisan coalition of legislators, including Senator Wirch, aims to recognize these individuals for their service to our country by giving them “Veteran” status and ensuring they are provided the benefits an individual who has served the United States military has earned.

The National Museum of the United States Air Force reports that during the Vietnam War, over 60% of Hmong men were approached by the Central Intelligence Agency to aid the United States efforts against the communist forces in the region, specifically by disrupting trade routes used by North Vietnam. After the war ended, many of these people faced persecution and fled to other areas of the world, including the United States. Wisconsin became one of the focal points of this resettlement, and according to data provided by the US Census Bureau, it holds the third largest population of Hmong people in the country, behind California and Minnesota.

“It is past time that we show our deep respect and thanks to the Hmong Veterans who were recruited and trained and diligently served our country,” Wirch asserted.

A bill similar to this was killed last session after Senate leadership failed to schedule it for a vote. Legislators from both sides of the aisle hope this new session will lead to fresh ideas and new perspectives on the legislation.

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