



PATRICK TESTIN STATE SENATOR

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Sen. Testin bill honoring veterans signed into law

BARABOO, Wis. – Sen. Patrick Testin (R-Stevens Point) is proud his bill that honors an important group of veterans was signed into law earlier today.

The bipartisan SB 633 recognizes the legacy of the Ho-Chunk code talkers by naming the stretch of Interstate 90 from Monroe County to the state line the Ho-Chunk World War II Code Talkers Memorial Highway.

One translation of the word Ho-Chunk is “People of the Big Voice.” During World War II, at least 14 Ho-Chunk servicemen used their voices – and their language – to confuse the enemy and help the Allies win the war. They, along with native people from 32 other tribes, were known as code talkers.

Working in pairs, one code talker would translate messages from English to their native language over portable radios to a fellow code talker who would then translate them back to English from their native language. These codes were never deciphered by wartime adversaries.

“Many people may not know this, but there were large numbers of Native Americans who served in the U.S. military before they were recognized as citizens or had voting rights,” Sen. Testin said. “Furthermore, the mission of the code talkers was classified and not listed in their discharge papers, making it rather difficult to acknowledge their contributions during the war. Now that we have a better understanding of their courageous service, I believe it is our duty to ensure that their sacrifices are never forgotten.”

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