



Jim Doyle, Governor
John A. Scocos, Secretary

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Assembly Bill 210 signed by Governor Doyle recodifies state veterans-related statutes

(MADISON) -- Governor Jim Doyle today signed into law AB 210, legislation that recodifies the chapter of the state statutes dealing with state veterans programs and services.

“The recodification of Wisconsin’s veterans-related statutes provided by this bill was urgently needed,” said Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John A. Scocos, “and we greatly appreciate the efforts of the Legislature and Governor Doyle in passing and enacting this legislation.”

“Multiple definitions of the term “veteran”, antiquated terminology dating back nearly 100 years or more, and the cumulative effect of generations of amendments left the state statutes on veterans affairs difficult, if not impossible, for service workers and veterans to understand,” said Scocos.

At the request of the department, the Joint Legislative Council created a Special Committee to recodify the statutes related to veterans affairs. Led by Rep. John Townsend (R-Fond du Lac), the 13 committee members included a bipartisan group of legislators, officials from WDVA and the state Department of Military Affairs, and veterans’ advocates.

“That bipartisanship has been a hallmark of meeting our veterans needs in our great state of Wisconsin,” said Scocos.

The committee was charged with reorganizing the chapter in a logical manner, renumbering and retitling sections, consolidating related provisions, modernizing language, resolving ambiguities in language, making other necessary organizational changes, and making minor substantive changes.

Among the changes were a consolidation of the definition of “veteran” and an expansion of eligibility to veterans who remain missing in action, who died as a result of a service-connected disability, and who died in the line of duty in the active or reserve components, including the National Guard. Additionally, the rules for determining future wartime periods were simplified to provide for more rapid approval for state veterans benefits eligibility purposes.

Legislative members of the committee included Rep. Townsend, Sen. Roger Breske (D-Eland), Sen. Ron Brown (R-Eau Claire), Sen. Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau), Rep. Judy Krawczyk (R-Green Bay), Rep. Gabe Loeffelholz (R-Platteville), Rep. Terry Musser (R-Black River Falls), and Rep. Marlin Schneider (D-Wisconsin Rapids).

The new law, 2005 Act 22, replacing Wisconsin statutes chapter 45, will take effect on Saturday, July 23, before being modified by the budget bill that is expected to be signed on July 25.