



STATE OF WISCONSIN, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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Jim Doyle, Governor  
John A. Scocos, Secretary

## Attention Newsroom—News Release

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For Immediate Release

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### **WDVA Secretary praises Governor and the Legislature for new veterans legislation that expands benefits for Wisconsin veterans Bill also extends benefits to those serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom**

(MADISON) – Earlier today in Madison, Governor Jim Doyle signed [Senate Bill 170](#), a veterans omnibus bill. At a special ceremony this afternoon, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John A. Scocos represented Governor Doyle at the Richard I. Bong World War II Heritage Center in Superior in recognition of the bill signing.

Governor Jim Doyle said, “Wisconsin has a right to be proud that we offer the very best services and benefits to our veterans of any state in the country. Today I am pleased to sign important legislation that ensures that our state remains at the forefront when it comes to supporting our veterans”.

Secretary Scocos said, “This is an extremely important piece of legislation. It protects and expands existing programs to ensure that Wisconsin veterans receive the benefits and services that they deserve to include those veterans recently deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. The bill further helps to preserve the veterans trust fund, and ensures the financial viability of state veterans programs”.

In addition to extending state veterans benefits to those currently serving in Iraq, the bill also repeals the current two-year active requirement to ensure that those who are called to active duty are eligible for state benefits in addition to other veteran benefits.

“This legislation would not have been possible without the tremendous support of the Governor, the entire state legislature and the veterans community throughout Wisconsin,” said Scocos. The bill was sponsored by State Senator Ron Brown (R-Eau Claire), also Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security, Veterans and Military Affairs and Government Reform Committee and State Representative Terry Musser, (R-Black River Falls), Chairman of the Assembly Veterans and Military Affairs Committee.

(more)

## Senate Bill 170 Bill Signing

### Add One

“We also owe a great debt of gratitude to the leadership of the legislature including State Senators Panzer, Erpenbach, State Representatives Gard and Kreuser”, said Scocos.

Chris Jordan, President of the County Veterans Service Officer Association (CVSOA) said, “There are several provisions in S.B.170 that will assist the veterans that we serve. This bill recognizes our newest veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom to include all those serving in the active forces, Reserve and National Guard being called up for this endeavor”.

Al Kochendorfer, Commander of the Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) said, “While the State of Wisconsin already provides the widest array of benefits and services for it’s veterans, this omnibus bill makes it even better”.

The Richard I. Bong Heritage Center, named for W.W. II “Ace of Aces” Richard Bong, opened September 24, 2002. The center honors the service of all World War II veterans. Programs and exhibits feature both the home front and the conflicts overseas.

Scocos said, “It was an honor to represent Governor Jim Doyle at the center today in recognition of the signing of this very important bill, which expands benefits for all Wisconsin Veterans from our most elderly to our youngest veterans.

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