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**Attention Newsroom—News Release**

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**State Assembly Provides Additional Funding for Veterans Programs**

(MADISON) -- Funding for state veterans programs is set to be increased according to the budget bill passed by the state Assembly in Wednesday's early morning hours.

"In this time when we are creating new veterans every day, the work of Assembly Speaker John Gard, Majority Leader Mike Huebsch, and the Wisconsin State Assembly is sincerely appreciated in providing new funding for the military funeral honors program and in reallocating funding to keep veterans educational benefits at the same high level as today," said Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John A. Scocos.

In an amendment to the budget bill approved by the Assembly, tax dollars from the state's general fund would be provided to cover the costs of providing stipends to veterans groups that perform military honors at veterans' funerals.

The Assembly amendment would also reallocate funding to continue full reimbursement of academic fees for veterans participating in state veterans tuition reimbursement programs.

"This funding comes even after including all the measures unanimously passed by the Joint Committee on Finance for severely disabled veterans, war widows and surviving children, newly returning troops, and measures to help ensure the solvency of the Veterans Trust Fund," said Scocos.

Among the measures that had already been included in the budget bill passed by the Legislature's Joint Finance committee was the Wisconsin G.I. Bill, which would provide a 50% reduction in tuition and fees for any eligible Wisconsin veteran returning to school.

The proposal would also provide a waiver of tuition and fees at a University of Wisconsin or Wisconsin Technical College campus to the unremarried surviving spouses and any children under age 26 of veterans who are killed in the line of duty. The benefit would also be extended to the spouses and children of seriously disabled veterans.

Other new proposals included in the budget passed by the Assembly were property tax relief for totally disabled veterans and surviving spouses of veterans killed in action, a housing voucher program for chronically homeless veterans, funding for "Mission Welcome Home" outreach to newly returning veterans, and measures to shore up the state's Veterans Trust Fund.