



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Sen. Testin and Rep. Goyke Introduce Bi-partisan Wisconsin Veterans Farm Bill of 2017 *Proposal Would Create Program in DATCP to Recruit Veterans into Agriculture*

Madison, WI – Wisconsin has a strong tradition of military service and agricultural excellence. Now, a bi-partisan group of legislators is trying to bring the two traditions together with the Wisconsin Veterans Farm Bill of 2017.

Senator Patrick Testin (R-Town of Hull) and Representative Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee) along with co-authors Sen. Janis Ringhand (D-Evansville) and Rep. Ed Brooks (R-Reedsburg) are introducing a proposal to create a program to recruit military veterans into farming and authorize the creation of a logotype for veteran farmer products.

“This legislation is pro-veteran, pro-agriculture, and pro-workforce,” said Rep. Goyke. “It makes investments in both the future of agriculture, and the futures of our veterans – it’s good policy, and I’m proud to author it.”

The legislators drew on other states to craft the proposal. Sen. Ringhand commented on that process:

“There are several states that have similar programs; we looked very closely at West Virginia’s successful program when putting together the Wisconsin Veterans Farm Bill of 2017.”

The proposal has a number of potential benefits. In addition to bolstering the agricultural workforce, it aims to help veterans transition back to civilian life.

“Many veterans return from war with scars,” said Sen. Testin. “Some are visible, others aren’t. Studies show that rigorous physical work like the type that farmers do every day, can have a therapeutic effect for those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).”

Rep. Ed Brooks, who served in the U.S. Army Reserve and worked for decades as a dairy farmer, believes that the bill will help solidify the future of Wisconsin agriculture.

“Farming has been a rewarding career for me, and I want others to have the opportunities that I’ve had. The average age of a farmer in Wisconsin is 58 years old. We need young people with new ideas to usher in the next generation of advancements in agriculture. This bill helps move us forward.”

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