



Testimony of Rep. Dianne Hesselbein  
Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities  
AB 184 (SB 188)  
December 16, 2015

Mr. Chairperson and members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving us the opportunity for a public hearing on our bills. It is very refreshing to be working together.

I am pleased to speak today in support of AB 184. (There is also a companion bill in the Senate Universities and Technical Colleges Committee, SB 188-A public hearing was held on October 7th). This bill was inspired after speaking with veterans at a local VFW Auxiliary meeting.

Current law requires the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin (UW) System to establish policies for transferring credits between UW System institutions and allows the Board of Regents to establish policies for credit transfers with other educational institutions.

The Board of Regents and the Technical College System Board must also enter into an agreement, which private colleges may join, for transferring credits for core general education courses.

AB 184 requires the Board of Regents to accept all foreign language credits transferred from the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center on behalf of a student who is a current or former member of the U.S. armed forces or of a reserve unit the U.S. armed forces and who successfully completed a course of study at the Institute.

Why are we doing this? This issue was brought to my attention by several people who work with admissions who explained while several schools transfer the credits, not all do.

For example, Michael "Gunner" Furgal, Past State Commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, had this problem. Gunner is here today registering in favor and I told him I would share his story. Gunner was a graduate of the Defense Language Institute's 52-week course in the Vietnamese Northern Dialect. He spent three years in country speaking, reading and writing Vietnamese. He was an instructor in the Vietnamese language at Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, VA. He also served at the faculty at the Monterey, where he helped prepare correspondence courses in Vietnamese.

When he attempted to get credit for his language as a student at UW, his request was denied. AB 184 would prevent this from happening to a current student. This happened to Michael Furgal in 1982.

This bill directs the University to come up with a policy that is fair to veteran students. These people stepped up to serve the call of our great nation. Let's just be sure when they return that the welcome back does not stop at the airport. Let's be sure they receive the recognition they deserve for the education they received. This would make it clear that Wisconsin understands and appreciates our Veterans who have chosen to become an expert in a language field to further strengthen and support the United States of America both here and abroad.

Please join me in supporting AB 184. Thank you for your attention.



# JULIE LASSA

## STATE SENATOR

**Testimony on Assembly Bill 184  
Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities  
Wednesday, December 16, 2015  
412 East**

Chairman Murphy and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Assembly Bill 184, which Representative Hesselbein and I have introduced on behalf of veterans and current military personnel in the State of Wisconsin. This is a simple bill that will allow veterans and active duty members of the military to receive academic credits for foreign language classes they have successfully completed as part of their military training or service, provided these courses meet certain criteria.

Over the past 10 years in the United States, three million veterans have returned from military service with another one million expected to return over the next five years, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Our veterans will hopefully be returning to Wisconsin to become part of the civilian workforce, which is currently suffering from worker shortages in several key sectors of our state's economy. These veterans are valuable, as they have unique leadership skills, training and experiences that many employers find important.

AB 184 will build on the strengths of veterans and active duty military personnel by allowing them to receive university and technical college credits for foreign language skills they have already successfully obtained through their military service. Doing so will give their pursuit of a higher education degree a boost, as well as honor their hard work and dedication to our nation. It's important to note that this is an area where we can really improve the educational achievement level of our workforce, as the United States Census Bureau's statistics show that only 26% of veterans over the age of 25 have at least a bachelor's degree.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 25 states have already enacted some form of academic credit for veterans in relation to the experience, education and training obtained during their military service. With your support, I am hopeful that Wisconsin will formally join their ranks by adopting AB 184.



***Military Order of the Purple Heart  
Department of Wisconsin***



**To:** Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities  
**From:** Jason E. Johns, State Legislative Officer  
**Re:** Support AB 184  
**Date:** December 16, 2015

**Chairperson Murphy & Honorable Members of the Committee:**

The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Wisconsin, applauds Representative Diane Hesselbein and Senator Julie Lassa for authoring AB 184 and asks the committee to pass it on to the full Assembly for passage.

The Defense Language Institute is one of the world's most prestigious places to study a language. It has over 300 civilian staff members and its programs are certified by the US Department of Education. Thus, it is not too much of a stretch for the Board of Regents to accept training here as equivalent to the language training classes it offers in the Wisconsin System.

The state of Wisconsin has expressed its understanding that training and education received in the military has value and has recently implemented requirements that the Boards of the Department of Safety & Professional Services accept this training towards licensure and certification requirements if it deems it equivalent to that received by civilians. The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Wisconsin hopes that you will continue this reality of quality education and training in the U.S. Armed Forces and recommend AB 184 for passage in the state Assembly.

Thank you,

**Jason E. Johns**

State Legislative Officer

Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Wisconsin





**State Relations**

1738 Van Hise Hall  
1220 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706-1559  
(608) 262-1312  
email: [jbuhrandt@uwsa.edu](mailto:jbuhrandt@uwsa.edu)  
website: <http://www.wisconsin.edu>

December 16, 2015

**Testimony from UW System on AB 184**

As you all know, AB 184 would require the Board of Regents to accept all foreign language credits transferred from the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center on behalf of a student who has successfully complete a course of student at the Center and is a current or former member of the U.S. armed forces.

Currently, all of the institutions within UW System accept credits generated through the Defense Learning Institute and through military training courses. In order to remain compliant with accreditation policies, each institution uses criteria set by the Higher Learning Commission to evaluate the use of those credits, which is the same practice used for any other credits being considered for transfer.

Being that our institutions are already accepting these credits and are doing so in the same manner other credits are managed, the Board of Regents have taken a neutral position on this bill. While passing the bill would have no immediate impact on our practices, the Board is hesitant to support legislation that codifies policies in statute, especially while the Board is advocating for increased flexibilities from the state.

The Board position does identify one potential problem with AB 184 and asks that the legislature amend the bill if it moves forward. The amendment would add language stating that "the course is similar in subject matter to a course offered by the institution." This would ensure consistency in how transfer credits are evaluated.

I would also add that UW intuitions are all signatories to the binding Department of Defense Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (aka "the DOD MOU") because they all participate in the federal Tuition Assistance (TA) Program.

Signing the DOD MOU requires participating institutions to "Recognize and use the ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Service to determine the value of learning acquired in military service and award credit for appropriate learning acquired in military service at levels consistent with ACE Guide recommendations and/or those transcribed by CCAF (Community College of the Air Force), when applicable to a Service member's program."

Also, under the umbrella of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), UWSA has co-sponsored training programs with the Washington DC based American Council on Education (ACE )to inform faculty and staff about the ACE Guide and how to map ACE recommendations to university coursework.

All of these efforts and commitments underscore the fact that we, as a System and as individual institutions are working very hard to maximize the credits available to our veterans. However, in recognition that there is always more we can do, UW System, with support from the Lumina Foundation, is a key partner in the Midwestern Higher Education Compact's (MHEC) Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit or "MCMC". The MCMC is a 13-state 3 year initiative to identify policies and practices to help military service members, veterans, and their families to overcome barriers to access, participation, and completion of a postsecondary credential and entrance into the workforce. MCMC members are organized into four work groups that reflect the depth, complexity and wide scope of the military credit issue. The MCMC work groups address:

- Articulation of Credit, focused on identifying policies and promising practices at the national, state, and institutional level that can facilitate the translation of military training and experience into college credit/progress toward completing a certificate or degree.
- Licensure and Certification, focused on addressing the absence of common standards in the military's service credentialing programs, inconsistent state laws, and a lack of understanding about how military training and experience translates into licensing and academic credits.
- Communications and Outreach, addresses inadequate communication to current and former service members regarding higher education opportunities and planning; and the lack of consistent and accurate information.
- Data, Technology, and Systems addresses systems for linking higher ed institutions to the Joint Services Transcript (JST) provider, the appropriate military staff decision makers who can approve electronic access of the JST, and linkages to national academic and military coursework in Transferology, a nation-wide network designed to help students explore their college transfer options.

Thank you for the opportunity to share UW System's thoughts on this issue. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Jeff Buhrandt  
Director, State Relations  
UW System Administration  
608-262-1312  
[jbuhrandt@uwsa.edu](mailto:jbuhrandt@uwsa.edu)

Jeff Schoenfeldt  
Director, State Relations  
UW System Administration  
(608) 265-3419  
[jschoenfeldt@uwsa.edu](mailto:jschoenfeldt@uwsa.edu)