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## **Assembly Committee on Education Testimony in Support of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 32 June 12, 2025**

Chairman Kitchens and members of the Assembly Committee on Education, thank you for taking my testimony on Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), relating to: access to public high schools for military recruiters.

Our military servicemembers have earned the respect, recognition, and opportunities afforded to them by a grateful nation. It is both surprising and disappointing to learn that some local school districts in Wisconsin have placed unnecessary restrictions on military recruiters, limiting their ability to share information about service opportunities with interested students. Such actions stand in direct contrast to the spirit of federal law, which has long required that military recruiters receive the same access to secondary schools as postsecondary institutions and prospective employers.

AB 32 is a commonsense proposal that ensures military recruiters are given fair and meaningful access—nothing more, nothing less. The bill does not require classroom access or interfere with instructional time. Instead, it simply guarantees that recruiters may use common areas during the school day or at school-sanctioned events where students are likely to gather. This framework protects the integrity of the school environment while honoring the service of our men and women in uniform.

Providing this access does not compel any student to enlist. Rather, it gives them the opportunity to make informed decisions about their future—whether through college, employment, or military service. Denying equal access denies students the full scope of options they deserve to consider.

I urge the committee to advance AB 32 and uphold our collective commitment to fairness, respect, and informed opportunity for all Wisconsin students.

Thank you for taking my testimony.



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# RACHAEL A. CABRAL-GUEVARA

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STATE SENATOR • 19<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

*Testimony before the Assembly Committee on Education*

*Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara*

*June 12, 2025*

Hello, members of the Assembly Committee on Education. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Assembly Bill 32, a bill that would allow meaningful access to recruitment in schools for our military recruiters.

I'll keep this testimony brief. Our military and service members deserve the respect and honor they have earned. That is why it was surprising to hear that certain local school districts have denied military recruiters meaningful access to public high schools.

Federal law has a long-standing policy of requiring many school districts to allow military recruiters the same access to high schools as local education agencies. However, this has not always meant equal access for military recruitment officers. Some officers have been placed in restrictive areas on campus that are not clearly accessible or visible to students.

This proposal would ensure two things for recruiter access: that recruiters have access to a common area of the school and that they have this access during the school day or at a school-sanctioned event where students are likely to congregate freely.

This bill explicitly does not require access to recruitment in a classroom during instructional time.

I am hopeful you will support this important bill, allowing kids to learn more about what service in any of our armed service branches have to offer.

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*The mission of The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin is to provide service to veterans, their families and their communities.*

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June 12, 2025

Chair Kitchens and members of the Assembly Education Committee.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the authors of AB-32 Representative Penterman and Senator Cabral-Guevara.

The American Legion is the largest Veterans Service Organization in the Nation. In Wisconsin, we have over 45,000 members. You will find American Legion Posts in all 72 counties of the. We were chartered by Congress in 1919 and have been advocating for veterans, their families and serving their communities ever since.

This bill is really about fairness to the recruiters for the all volunteer armed forces of the United States. AB-32 requires the same access to students of secondary schools in Wisconsin as any other potential employer. This means the common areas and attendance at school sanctioned events such as job fairs or career days.

The US Army War College Quarterly published a paper in 2023 titled A Historical Perspective on Today's Recruiting Crisis. According to the author, in 2022 the army missed its quota by 25%. He went on to ask the question: is the voluntary force reaching its maximum size? Are we maxing out on the available volunteers? The paper goes on to review the history of recruitment. This year the army met its quota early. Many believe this to be due to the uncertain private sector employment outlook.

This points out how important access is when searching for employees. The armed forces require recruits who are not only physically fit but also capable of managing cutting edge technology. The recruiters are competing with industry for an ever shrinking pool of potential employees. If you are looking for the best you must have access to the best.

The American Legion urges you to recommend adoption and forward this bill to the Assembly for action.



Paul Fisk

## Testimonial of the Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

### In Support of 2025 Assembly Bill 32

On behalf of the members of the Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), we are proud to voice our support for Assembly Bill 32. This legislation is a commonsense, pro-veteran, pro-student initiative that ensures military recruiters are afforded appropriate access to Wisconsin high schools—an access that aligns with existing federal law while strengthening opportunities for our youth and maintaining the educational integrity of our classrooms.

Assembly Bill 32 provides critical benefits to the state of Wisconsin:

1. **Empowering Students with Options:** By allowing military recruiters access to common areas during the school day and to school-sanctioned events, students can learn about career, education, and service opportunities available through military service. This ensures that the military is presented as a viable and honorable path, just as colleges and civilian employers are.
2. **Supporting Workforce Development:** The military offers career training, education benefits, and skills that transfer directly into Wisconsin's workforce. By improving awareness and accessibility, this bill strengthens the pipeline of skilled, disciplined individuals who return to our communities prepared to lead and serve.
3. **Upholding Educational Balance:** We fully support that nothing in this bill requires school boards or governing boards of charter schools to allow military recruiters into classrooms during instructional time. This respects the academic focus of school hours while still giving students the opportunity to engage with recruiters outside class, such as in cafeterias, gymnasiums, or during career fairs and school events.
4. **Reaffirming Equal Opportunity:** This legislation ensures military recruiters receive the same access afforded to colleges and civilian employers, reinforcing fairness and neutrality in the opportunities presented to students across Wisconsin.

### Why Wisconsin's Veterans Support AB 32

As veterans, we understand firsthand the value of military service. It fosters discipline, leadership, responsibility, and patriotism. Many of us began our own journeys because a recruiter showed up to speak with us, not during class time, but in the hallways, cafeterias, or events where we could learn and ask questions. These informal, non-intrusive settings are where life-changing decisions often begin.

Our youth deserve to know all their options, and our armed forces deserve to be represented with the same dignity and access granted to other post-graduation opportunities. Assembly Bill

32 ensures this balance—promoting transparency, opportunity, and respect for both our students and our educators.

We urge Wisconsin lawmakers to pass this bill and stand with our veterans, students, and communities in supporting informed choices and future service.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Tilleson  
Director of Government Affairs  
Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

The mission of The American Legion,  
Department of Wisconsin is to  
provide service to veterans, their  
families and their communities.

**Jim Johnson**

*Department Commander*

**Paul Fisk**

*Legislative Chair*

**Nathan Coward**

*Legislative Vice-Chair*

**Cathy Gorst**

*Legislative Committee Member*

**Morris Sadicario**

*Legislative Committee Member*

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# LEGION WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

for the 2025-2026  
Legislative Session



## LEGION WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 2025-2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### **Support suicide prevention efforts**

It is estimated that up to 22 veterans die by suicide every day. Many do not avail themselves of the services provided by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. In Wisconsin, CDC reports Suicide as the second leading cause of childhood deaths (ages 10-24). The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin supports all efforts to reduce suicide in Wisconsin.

### **Support legislation and programs that recognize veterans for their service**

Wisconsin is the only state that no longer recognizes Veterans Day with paid time off to honor those who served. Wisconsin has over 1,000 service members who are listed as Missing in Action; they need to be accounted for. The American Legion Department of Wisconsin supports legislation to restore November 11th as a state holiday and to return the remains of Wisconsin service members listed as Missing in Action.

### **Support programs and legislation to achieve full employment of veterans**

Many veterans are either unemployed or under employed. Wisconsin needs to utilize the veteran's skills to achieve a robust, diverse, and sustainable economy. Legion Wisconsin supports all efforts to enable the full employment of Wisconsin veterans.

### **Support programs and legislation to provide improved access to health care for veterans and their families**

Access to quality health care is difficult for veterans and their families in many parts of Wisconsin. The impact is especially felt by rural veterans, female veterans and veterans of color.

The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin supports efforts to improve access to health care for all veterans regardless of location and expand payment options for services regardless of location or ability to pay.

### **Support our senior veterans**

Wisconsin currently has Veteran Care Facilities to provide care for our senior veterans. They are located in Central Wisconsin (King), Southeast Wisconsin (Union Grove), and Northwest Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls). These facilities provide essential quality care for our senior veterans. The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin supports the modernization of these facilities to maintain the high quality of care. The Department supports locating additional facilities in those areas of the state which are under served.

### **Support benefits for Wisconsin veterans and their families**

Wisconsin provides some of the most generous benefits to its veterans found in the country. These benefits not only benefit the veteran families, but also their communities.

The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin not only supports current benefits, but also supports providing benefits that are relevant to the newest generation of veterans.

### **Implement and oversee recent acts of the Legislature and the Administrative Code**

During the last Legislature there were several new laws that require revision of State Administrative Code.

The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin will work with the Legislature and the Administration to ensure proper implementation.

### **Support the families of active duty service members and veterans in Wisconsin**

The 2019-2020 Legislature began the process of providing new benefits to not only veterans but also to current members of the military community. They are addressing issues such as child support and child custody issues while deployed. Some families have found it difficult to find full employment due to the difficulty in transferring professional credentials.

The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin supports Legislation and Programs which provide education benefits to the children of service members and veterans residing in Wisconsin.