

Rep. Shankland: Introduces King Veterans Home Accountability Package

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Madison, Wisconsin – Today Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) introduced the King Veterans Home Accountability Package, four legislative proposals to address the severe staffing shortages and accountability concerns at the Veterans Home at King.

“Over the years, I have received phone calls and in-person reports about the deeply concerning workplace issues at the Veterans Home at King,” said Rep. Shankland. “The on-the-ground reports of chronic understaffing and forced overtime are substantiated by the recent legislative audit, which also revealed that 75% of King employees consider staff morale to be poor or very poor. We must act now.”

“Time and time again, the Department of Veterans Affairs has prioritized cost-cutting and pet programs over King staff and residents, including raiding tens of millions of dollars from veterans homes to support other funds. It’s time to put a stop to these irresponsible funding raids and invest in care workers to ensure that our veterans get the high quality care they deserve. With Governor Walker and his administration resisting even a minimum measure of accountability and oversight, the legislature must address these issues head-on.”

The King Veterans Home Accountability Package:

- Specifies that the financial needs of Wisconsin veterans homes receive first

consideration for the use of veterans home revenue before revenue is transferred to other DVA funds and programs.

- Creates an anonymous hotline for veterans home employees, residents, and their families to report abuse and neglect at veterans homes.
- Provides \$2 million annually for wage increases for veterans home employees in positions with high vacancy rates, to improve recruitment and retention. This bill specifies that certified nursing assistants (CNAs) must receive a minimum \$1/hour wage raise.
- Requires that the water at Wisconsin veterans homes be tested monthly and that the water quality test results be posted online.

“The residents of the Veterans Home at King have made immeasurable sacrifices for our country and it is our duty to ensure their health and safety,” continued Rep. Shankland. “Supporting our veterans and their caregivers should not be a partisan issue. It’s clear that these challenges at King aren’t going away, and I hope the legislature will act immediately on these commonsense proposals.”