

Rep. Barca: Announces efforts for Chair of Honor at the Wisconsin Capitol on POW/MIA Remembrance Day

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Barca announces efforts for Chair of Honor at the Wisconsin Capitol on POW/MIA Remembrance Day

MADISON - In conjunction with the National Prisoners of War / Missing in Action Remembrance Day today, Representative Peter Barca (Kenosha/Racine) announced that this week an effort to place a POW/MIA Chair of Honor at the Wisconsin State Capitol was given unanimous preliminary approval by the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board (SCERB), the commission tasked with oversight for the facilities.

“Today is when the country remembers the American servicemen and women that have not returned from combat, as well as their families,” Representative Barca said. “Since World War I, over 91,000 members of the US armed services remain unaccounted for, including at least 1,500 individuals from Wisconsin.”

The request for a Chair of Honor to be placed at the State Capitol comes on behalf of all veterans. It has been spearheaded in particular by Rolling Thunder and the Veterans of Foreign Wars with the assistance of Representative Barca. The Chair of Honor monument is a perpetually empty chair, left open for those who have not returned.

Similar monuments are displayed across the country and located in civically or culturally significant venues spanning from sporting stadiums to State Capitols to Emancipation Hall of the US Capitol. Chairs often reflect the venue where they are displayed. The display at the Wisconsin Capitol would be a permanent addition to the existing Veterans Memorial in the Capitol's Rotunda and would use an Assembly-style chair for the Chair of Honor. The Chair of Honor addition was approved in concept by SCERB at their meeting on Monday, but must still receive final approval from the board pending final recommendations from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans Affairs Secretary Dan Zimmerman has been supportive of the proposal. The display costs will be paid by the requestors and not be paid with taxpayer funds.

“There is never enough we can do to recognize the sacrifices of all who serve our country in uniform, but these actions attempt to demonstrate our commitment,” Barca noted. “There is more to be done to make this important monument a reality, but the vote by the board was a tremendous show of support for our veterans to receive in advance of POW/MIA Remembrance Day. The POW/MIA motto is ‘You Are Not Forgotten’ and with this memorial we continue to strive to honor our obligation. We will never forget.”

A similar POW/MIA Chair of Honor memorial was also officially unveiled today at the Veterans Home at Union Grove. Another prominent Wisconsin Chair of Honor is on display at Harley-Davidson in Milwaukee.

The proposal submitted to the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board for the proposed Wisconsin State Capitol Chair of Honor is attached.