

Rep. Hebl: Honor the sacrifices of fallen soldiers by taking care of those still with us

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Each year on Memorial Day we remember and honor those brave individuals that died defending the United States of America. We live in comfort and security because some have answered the call and gave all in service to our country. We should honor their sacrifice by ensuring that we take care of their brothers and sisters in arms who are lucky enough to return home. Our veterans often come back facing new obstacles and challenges as they transition back to civilian life.

We in the Legislature should make it a priority to assist returning veterans when they come back. This includes helping them find jobs, find housing, receive adequate health care including proper mental health care for the unseen wounds they too often suffer. We should never ask our service members to risk everything and then not help them transition back into civilian life.

We addressed some of these issues this past session, such as passing 2017 Wisconsin Act 195. Act 195 created the Hire Heroes program, which provides transitional jobs to veterans. There is still much work to be done, and unfortunately the majority party has allowed the pace of legislating to slow to a crawl. We are near the end of May, and we have met on the floor just four times thus far. In fact, many of the veteran-related bills introduced since last session never received a vote. I cannot say why the majority party has declined to even debate them.

I will continue to work with constituents, veterans, and my legislative colleagues to ensure our returning service members receive the best support the state of Wisconsin can give them.

Veterans sacrifice much to serve their country - time with their family, delaying their education, delaying careers, and sometimes laying down their lives. We owe it to them to repay them for that sacrifice.

Please keep in mind that Memorial Day is not just a three-day weekend. There is a reason that we have that Monday off, and I urge all of you to take a moment to reflect on the soldiers that have died in service of their country.

I wish everyone a safe and happy Memorial Day.