

Palzewicz campaign: Transition to civilian life often difficult for veterans

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Brookfield, WI - Regardless of where they serve, whether in combat or in peace, the transition back to civilian life can be a difficult and challenging process for military veterans. Democrat Tom Palzewicz, running for Wisconsin's Fifth Congressional District seat, is a U.S. Navy veteran and knows full well what veterans experience.

The military has a completely different pace than civilian life. Highly ordered and disciplined, the men and women in uniform adhere to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and they understand the need to maintain discipline in the ranks. The chain of command is essential to that discipline and military efficiency demands that all personnel pull in the same direction at the same time. Lives depend on that.

When a man and woman go from the disciplined life in the military to the "freedom" of civilian life, it is hard for them to make that change. In the military they may be highly-trained squad leaders, or division officers, all operating in a tightly controlled system. As a civilian, they are just another person, sometimes even marginalized or overlooked. The "thank you for your service" is replaced by having to take orders from someone with a fraction of their experience or expertise.

"Veterans don't want a special handout, but a hand up would be incredibly helpful," said Palzewicz, a former Electrician's Mate on a nuclear submarine. "They leave the military world and go back to the civilian world, where things are different. I think that's what is apparent when so many ex-military people go into law enforcement. Your time in service counts towards your pension, so it's a natural move. But, it's a completely different thing to be a police officer than it is to be in the Army, serving

in Afghanistan. We want their courage and their professionalism, but we don't give them the necessary help they need in making the transition.

"I would support programs that help out returning veterans with higher education, starting their own businesses, but most of all, have something in place for our men and women to assist them in getting reacquainted with civilian life. I had to go through that. It's tough."

Palzewicz appreciates and respects the training and professional abilities of military veterans. The skills learned while serving their country can and should be used in serving their communities.

"Leadership skills learned in the military apply to most every situation in the private sector," said Palzewicz. "Good military leaders are decisive, measured and consistent. They learn skills you can't learn in a classroom. General Dwight D. Eisenhower became president because he was first and foremost a great leader. That is where our veterans shine. America appreciates their service, but more importantly, it needs their leadership."

Palzewicz and veterans like him, sacrificed for their country. He believes the country needs to sacrifice for the veterans and provide the support they need when they come home.