



## THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION *HEARTENED* BY GOVERNOR'S INCREASED FUNDING PLEDGE FOR VETERANS**

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### ***CONCERNED* ABOUT LEGISLATIVE IMPACTS ON VETERANS' WAGES**

(MADISON, Wis.) – Governor Scott Walker today in his Budget Address announced his support for increasing funding grants to 1) the Wisconsin **American Legion Service Office** in Milwaukee for disability claims (\$30k increase), and 2) **Camp American Legion** in Lake Tomahawk (\$25k increase). Governor Walker also proposed in his budget released today a complete repeal of Wisconsin's long-standing **Prevailing Wage Laws**, which independent and peer-reviewed studies have concluded will disproportionately and negatively impact veterans seeking careers in the construction industry and the family-supporting wages that come with them.

#### **STATE COMMANDER DANIEL J. SEEHAFFER STATEMENT:**

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“The Wisconsin American Legion finds itself conflicted by the governor's Budget Address this afternoon. We understand and appreciate the governor's long-standing commitment to Wisconsin's veterans and the issues important to them, which is why we applaud the increases in funding for services and recreation for disabled veterans and their families. The proposed increases will result in a direct, immediate and positive impact for veterans. The governor is making a difference.

“We are equally confused by the governor's support for the complete repeal of Wisconsin's Prevailing Wage law, which uses federally-set wage rates for state building projects. The Wisconsin American Legion Executive Committee adopted a Resolution at our recent Midwinter Conference calling for the State Legislature to adopt measures to ensure that veterans receive employment preference for work on State, County and Municipal contracts at wages equal to or above the local market rate as established by Federal wage standards.

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## 2-2-2-2 WAL COMMANDER CONCERNED ABOUT LEGISLATIVE IMPACTS

Recent studies and subsequent peer reviews have found a repeal of these laws will unduly and negatively impact veterans working in or considering a future in the construction trades.

“We urge the governor to understand more completely how repealing Prevailing Wage will hurt veterans and we look forward to working with him and others in that educational effort.”

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### “Prevailing Wage and Military Veterans in Wisconsin: Applied Policy Brief,” *Midwest Economic Policy Institute* August 18, 2016

1. “Approximately **8.3%** of all blue-collar construction workers in Wisconsin **are military veterans**, in line with neighboring states but well above the 6.9% U.S. average.”
2. **2,000 VETERANS’ JOBS WILL BE LOST**
  - “An estimated 2,000 blue-collar veterans are expected to separate from their jobs in Wisconsin’s construction occupations due to the prevailing wage changes.”
3. **\$113 million IN LOST WAGES**
  - “...the total income of all veterans employed in construction jobs will decline by \$113 million, approximately **400 veterans will lose** their employer-provided **health plan**, and about **200 veteran workers** will fall into **poverty** by 2018.”

### “The prevailing wage laws are...very much a veterans’ issue”

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Abdur Chowdhury, Professor, Department of Economics, Marquette University