



RELEASE

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Wisconsin Chiefs of Police 2017-2018 Legislator of the Year Awards

The Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association announced today that at their summer conference in Green Bay two Wisconsin lawmakers will be the recipients of a “2017 – 2018 Legislator of the Year Award.” WCPA 2018 President, Chief Peter Nimmer (Shorewood) indicated these awards are not automatically given and reflect extraordinary effort on the part of these two lawmakers who stepped up to help the men and women in uniform across our state.

Rep. Andre Jacque (R-De Pere) introduced legislation and forced a public conversation about the impact of PTSD on law enforcement officers and unfriendly state statutes that impede law enforcement officers from getting the help they need so they can get back to work and do a job that they love. Through his efforts, a public hearing was held both in the state capitol and at the Worker’s Compensation Advisory Council, both critical steps to move this effort along in the legislative process.

“He moved the conversation to a public forum,” said Chief Nimmer, identifying that this is a real issue for law enforcement.” Nimmer says the law needs to be changed to allow law enforcement officers who are affected by the grueling demands and exposure to repeat violence on their jobs, to be able to get short term help through workers compensation insurance, then return to work.”

Currently, Wisconsin law is set up so that an officer who would rather return to work, is forced to retire early under a duty disability benefit. Nimmer says, “It is a loss for our communities and the officers who are doing a job they love, and who would prefer to return to work.” At times, all that is needed is for workers compensation insurance to pay for some counseling. Unlike those in military service where PTSD is recognized, even if for non-combat members, the same is not true for Wisconsin laws.

“Rep. Jacque was doggedly persistent in bringing this issue to the forefront,” says Nimmer. Separately, Rep. Jacque has consistently supported legislation that protects crime victims, restores the ability of law enforcement to require suspected drunk drivers to submit to blood draws, and legislation to eliminate loopholes that allow underage drinking parties.

Rep. John Spiros (R-Marshfield) was also given an award for his exemplary leadership as Chair of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. He took his prior service in law enforcement and spearheaded legislation that increased highway safety, improved school safety and tightened laws to revoke driver’s licenses for people with multiple drunk driving convictions. He also passed legislation allowing the Attorney General’s crime alert network to now be used to report threats against law enforcement. He also pushed to re-open the Mendota Mental Health Institute to reduce pressure on law enforcement resources used for emergency detentions.



The WCPA recently acknowledged Rep. Spiros and his staff for their extraordinary efforts to afford health insurance death benefits to surviving family members of an officer killed in the line of duty that would equal benefits currently given to firefighters under Wisconsin law. In addition, Rep. Spiros and his staff worked through the public Fallen Officer list to accurately determine the minor fiscal impact to taxpayers if a widow and children were allowed to continue health insurance under their spouses' policy, thereby making the proposed legislation more acceptable to those opposed to the bill.

Although these two important issues to law enforcement did not pass during the last session, they plan to reintroduce them again next session. The WCPA appreciates the support of these two lawmakers who do more than stand with blue. They proactively advocate for state laws that make the jobs of anyone who wears a badge, better.

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