



## 2019 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1       **Relating to:** honoring the life and public service of Senator Walter John Chilsen.

2           Whereas, on December 25, 2018, Walter John Chilsen passed away at the age  
3 of 95; and

4           Whereas, Chilsen served in the Wisconsin State Senate from 1967 to 1991,  
5 representing the people of the 29th Senate District; and

6           Whereas, Chilsen was born in Merrill, Wisconsin, in 1923 to Margaret and  
7 Walter Burt Chilsen; and

8           Whereas, during World War II, Chilsen enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, serving  
9 as a bombardier on a B-24 bomber and climbing the ranks to lieutenant; and

10          Whereas, Chilsen was injured when his plane crashed into the ocean near  
11 Saipan during the Battle of Iwo Jima; and

12          Whereas, Chilsen helped other crew members reach safety following the crash  
13 and was later awarded the Purple Heart; and

14          Whereas, after the war, Chilsen pursued a career in acting as well as in radio  
15 broadcasting at WLIN radio in Merrill; and

1           Whereas, in 1954, Chilsen become the news director and anchor for WSAU-TV  
2 — now known as WSAW-TV — when the station signed on the air as Wausau’s first  
3 television station; and

4           Whereas, over his 17-year career in radio and television broadcasting, Chilsen  
5 became Central Wisconsin’s most trusted and authoritative news voice and, in 2005,  
6 he was inducted into the Wisconsin Broadcasting Museum’s Hall of Fame; and

7           Whereas, during his 24 years in the Senate, Chilsen served on a variety of  
8 committees and was recognized for his accomplishments on behalf of senior citizens,  
9 agriculture and rural development, and environmental issues; and

10           Whereas, Chilsen was known in the legislature as a kind and thoughtful leader,  
11 a skilled orator, and a consensus builder, and

12           Whereas, after retiring from the state Senate, Chilsen served on the board of  
13 the town of Weston for 17 years before stepping down at the age of 94 in December  
14 2017; and

15           Whereas, Chilsen and his wife of 65 years, Rose, were involved in many  
16 volunteer activities and were instrumental in the founding of The Neighbors’ Place,  
17 a Wausau community center that provides food and other basic necessities for those  
18 in need; and

19           Whereas, Chilsen is survived by Rose, his eight children, and several  
20 grandchildren and great-grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

21           ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the members of the  
22 Wisconsin Legislature salute the life and public service of Walter John Chilsen and  
23 mourn his passing; and, be it further

