

Attn: State of Wisconsin Senators

Topic: Tabling Senate Bill 8 for investigative inquiry

On May 13, 2023, another veteran crossed the stage at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. That veteran is me. Upon graduating summa cum laude as a journalism major, I realized now is the time to get active publicizing the POW MIA issue.

My ongoing class project, Outpost 422, which is a trademarked reporting style, will cross the threshold into graduate school at UW Milwaukee next seeking help with launching of an eNewsletter raising awareness about what is going on at our State Capitol regarding the hyper politicizing of our Wisconsin POW MIA, which seeks help with launching the next phase of my community engagement campaign called "I Will NOT Forget." The campaign shares my story about what I endured advocating for the POW MIA in the college classroom, the benefits of the UW POWMIA Recovery and Identification Project, along with receiving backlash from professors who will not let veterans utilize the freedom of academic expression that stifled my brand's opportunities to raise awareness.

For my journalism capstone, I was an investigative reporter developing an interactive media online investigative outreach informing classmates and viewers about what I had uncovered during the development of Senate Bill 602, which I believe is the bill preceding the introduction of Senate Bill 8, which is now being brought before the public for comment.

I support the funding of the UW MIA Recovery and Identification Project, however I do not support Rep. Robin Vos and Rep. Jim Steinke's role with hyper politicizing the POW MIA issue, like what happened with Senate Bill 602. Upon interviewing Dept. of Finance Secretary Peter Barca during the last session, he mentioned "someone is playing politics here. We have over a \$2 billion surplus. The bill has bipartisan support."

Our Joint Committee on Finance should be admonished for withholding Senate Bill 602 from being brought before the senate. As a POW MIA advocate, supporter of the UW MIA Recovery and Identification Project's research and "Boot on the Ground" pilot, along with the collective efforts of the UW Madison Biotechnology Center, I ask our senators to assemble an ad hoc committee to address the development of Senate Bill 602, why the bill was not passed, and how we can hold the ranking members of the Joint Committee on Finance accountable this time ensuring that those of us who advocate for the families of the POW MIA can guarantee this won't happen again. I will be following up with all of you in the future regarding this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,

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