GOP backed legislation eliminates the remaining duties of the Wisconsin Veterans Board, gives those jobs to the WDVA, and makes significant changes to the duties of local County Veterans Service Officers.

MADISON - Two Democratic state legislators called on the authors of a bill to significantly change delivery of Veterans services in every county of Wisconsin to withdraw the effort.

Representative **Gordon Hintz** (D-Oshkosh) and Senator **Jon Erpenbach** (D-Middleton) say LRB 4524 circulated by Representative
Ken Skowronski
(R-Franklin) and Senator
Van Wanggard
(R-Racine) eliminates all of the remaining duties of the Wisconsin Veterans Board, gives those jobs to WDVA Secretary Scocos, and makes significant changes to County Veterans Service Officer(CVSO) and their duties.

“I am not sure why Secretary Scocos and the Department of Veterans Affairs are pushing a plan that could sacrifice the local connection points to Veterans services the CVSO officers provide. This is careless. We should be expanding the role of CVSO’s and expanding Veterans services in every county in Wisconsin not cutting them,” said Senator Jon Erpenbach. “If the authors are genuine they should bring everyone involved to the table and work for positive change, which clearly was not done here.”

“No one knows better what the Veterans in my community are struggling with than our local CVSO. Political appointees in Madison are not working with Veterans trying to navigate post service lives hands on, maybe that is why they did not anticipate how this proposal would

frustrate local Veterans. Well this proposal is activating local Veterans, and for good cause. Our CVSO officers serve as our boots on the ground in Wisconsin's counties, we should be enhancing their role in our communities," said Representative Gordon Hintz.

WDVA Secretary Scocos has stated CVSO participation in the bill development. CVSO representatives strongly disagree and were not even shared a draft of the bill for feedback. The proposal would make the appointment of a CVSO in a county optional and would allow for the one officer to serve multiple counties. The proposal also allows for the hiring of a non-Veteran for this position, which is now required to be a Veteran. Additionally, the bill eliminates the remaining role of the Wisconsin Veteran Board and gives more authority to Secretary Scocos. Once a thriving and active board, the Wisconsin Veterans Board no longer sets policy for Veterans in Wisconsin.

"We have a strong proposal to meet mental health needs we know Veterans have through an existing Veterans program SB 370/AB 510 introduced in October that has not even had a public hearing. Secretary Scocos and WDVA have been actively worked to stall those bills; now this, it is disappointing," said Senator Erpenbach.

"I know that the authors of this proposal believed they were putting forward a proposal built through consensus which is simply not true. Now is their opportunity to check back in with their local active Veterans and CVSO Officer and affect positive change for our Veterans. I hope they take that opportunity," said Representative Gordon Hintz.