

Veterans Suffer Most From Wisconsin Legislation

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Sam Erickson
Friday, 28 October 2016 15:05 -



Study links bill to lost jobs, reduced wages and higher poverty for veterans.

WAUPACA, WI – Wisconsin veterans are likely to suffer the most under a new law passed by Wisconsin legislators according to [a study by the Midwest Economic Policy Institute](#). The report found that up to 2,000 Wisconsin veterans are expected to lose their jobs as a result of recent changes to the state's prevailing wage laws.



"This report is extremely troubling, especially at a time when wages are stagnant, our economy is struggling and veterans are looking for work," said Brian Smith, Waupaca's Mayor and a candidate for the 14th Senate District. "Construction jobs are a key sector for returning veterans who have the dedication, work ethic, and skilled training needed to fill open positions. The fact that Sen. Olsen voted to limit these employment opportunities and cut family wages shows how out-of-touch he is with local veterans and employers."

In a statement, the [American Legion](#) noted the troubling impact recent changes to Wisconsin prevailing wage laws are having on local veterans. "Any law that makes it harder for veterans to live and support their families needs serious reconsideration," said Mike Burt, Post 139 Commander and heavy equipment operating engineer. American Legion State Commander Daniel Seehafer of Horicon said, "The construction industry has really filled a vital role in putting veterans to work and helping them make the critical transition from combat to construction. We should always be looking for ways to increase job and career opportunities for veterans."

According to the study, the Legislature's repeal of prevailing wage laws is expected to:

- Reduce the annual incomes of veteran blue-collar construction workers by 7 to 11 percent;
- Lower employer-provided health coverage for veterans in construction by 11 to 15 percent;
- Force nearly 200 veteran workers into poverty; and
- Negatively impact veterans working in Wisconsin's construction industry and veterans who

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own construction firms.

“I care about our returning veterans and want to make sure that everyone has access to a quality job with family-supporting wages,” added Smith. “From fixing the problems at the King Veteran Home to investing in workforce development, I’ll stand up for local families and fight for our military families who have sacrificed so much for our country.”