WINGA's Legislative Update

Federal Legislation: Pay Our Troops Act of 2026 (S.3002 / H.R.5401)

NGAUS is actively advocating for passage of the bipartisan *Pay Our Troops Act of 2026*, which would ensure continued pay for service members and DoD civilian employees until full appropriations are enacted, or through January 1, 2027. Members are encouraged to contact their Congressional delegation in support of this legislation. https://www.ngaus.org/write-congress/payourtroopsact

Wisconsin State Legislation

Tax Fairness for Service Members

Thank you to all members who contacted their legislators in support of exempting **Annual Training (AT)** and **Inactive Duty Training (IDT)** pay from Wisconsin income tax. Draft legislation (LRB-6152/1 and LRB-6157/1), authored by Rep. Benjamin Franklin, Rep. William Penterman, and Sen. Jesse James, would close the current tax gap that exempts active-duty pay but taxes mandatory Guard training. WINGA and WNGEA strongly support this pro-readiness, pro-retention measure.

Definition of a Veteran in Wisconsin Law

WINGA and WNGEA are working with Rep. Maxey's office on proposed legislation to modernize Wisconsin's statutory definition of a veteran. The goal is to better align state law with federal standards and ensure equitable recognition and access to benefits for Guard and Reserve members who have honorably served.

Veterans & Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit (SB 664 / AB 686)

SB 664 and AB 686 have been introduced and referred to committee. The bills would expand eligibility by lowering the disability threshold from 100% to 70% and creating a proportional credit for veterans rated 70–99%, while preserving current benefits for those rated at 100% or based on Individual Unemployability. A fiscal estimate has been completed; no hearings have been scheduled yet.

Education Benefits – Wisconsin GI Bill

AB 47 / SB 59 would fully modernize the Wisconsin GI Bill by eliminating outdated residency requirements and extending in-state tuition to all Wisconsin National Guard members. Related legislation, SB 640, reduces the residency requirement from five years to three but retains residency-based barriers and does not fully address Guard tuition parity. WINGA and WNGEA continue to support full modernization to reflect the realities of military service.

Veteran Identifier on Driver's Licenses – PASSED

SB 387 / AB 389 has passed both chambers of the Wisconsin Legislature and has been enrolled, sending the bill to the Governor for signature. The legislation expands eligibility for the veteran designation on Wisconsin driver's licenses and state IDs, improving recognition for honorably discharged Guard and Reserve members.