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**Senate Bill 190**

**Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee**

**Sponsor Testimony**

**October 24, 2017**

Good morning Chairman Uecker, Vice-Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 190, which grants full-time state employee veterans additional paid leave for the purpose of receiving medical treatment through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Under this proposal, full-time state employee veterans will receive up to 96 hours of additional leave time per year, which is equal to one, 8-hour work day per month. The additional benefit must be used strictly for the purpose of attending appointments to receive treatment from the VA or a VA Service Provider.

In order to use this leave time, the employee must submit a request to the appropriate supervisor with reasonable notice, unless such request is deemed an emergency. Any remaining leave time at the conclusion of the calendar year shall not be carried over, be forfeited, and be prohibited from being cashed out.

This legislation would alleviate the stress and worry many veterans face when they take leave from work. These men and women should not be forced to decide which is more important: getting treatment or keeping their job.

As a former service member and combat veteran, I can greatly empathize with those veterans working in state government and how difficult it can be to make and keep appointments with the VA Medical Systems. These men and women have gone through hell and back on to serve and protect the name of this great nation.

In my personal experience of dealing with the VA Medical System, appointments given out in a sporadic manner and patients are informed with little notice.

Chairman Uecker and members of the Local Government Committee thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 190. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.