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# JESSE KREMER

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 59<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

3/21/2017

## **Maintaining Relevancy for All Vets; The American Legion Legacy**

I was blown away when I opened a recent letter from my own Wisconsin American Legion. The topic? If legislators don't act, 2000 Wisconsin veteran construction jobs and \$113 million in wages will be lost and 200 more veterans will be in poverty - within a year... *if* legislators complete the repeal of artificially inflated wages on state projects, otherwise known as prevailing wage. As I dug into this astounding union-generated propaganda piece, I became more concerned. The highly charged prevailing wage debate is not reminiscent of past American Legion endeavors. The Legion was vital in the creation of the VA, fought in Congress for a US Flag Code and helped to author the GI bill - honorable achievements for *all* veterans.

Having been a union member for 35% of my employed days, I am not one to promote or dissuade union membership. That being said, I was disturbed to find that the newest legion post in Wisconsin, Post 139, not only bears the same numerals as the Local 139 Operating Engineers, but membership in the post is strictly limited to Operating Engineers. (Coincidentally, the Operating Engineers 139 lobbyists in Madison have been fighting desperately to prevent a repeal of prevailing wage - something that would allow greater entrepreneurship and small business creation.) At a time when the American Legion has a dwindling membership, potentially compromising non-partisan integrity through a muddled relationship with a third party politically leftist lobby is not only disturbing on many levels, but begs the question, how can they maintain relevancy?

When queried, Wisconsin's Adjutant General David Kurtz, was adamant with me that the resolution and study touted in the promotional material was "peer reviewed by a Marquette professor." Incidentally, Professor Abdur Chowdhury, Ph.D. was the same individual whose studies became gospel for the left when slamming Right to Work legislation. I asked General Kurtz multiple times during the course of our conversation, "Have you talked to any of our construction companies in Wisconsin to garner anecdotal evidence?" His response, "It is a peer reviewed study." Large construction companies have told us that, yes, there are worker shortages and no lack of projects on the horizon. To top it all off, the Wisconsin Legion leadership dropped the ball by failing to represent its membership during Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary Zimmerman confirmation hearings in Madison last week. It is time to get back to our fundamentals as a Legion, maintain our relevancy, and remember that "From the outset, The American Legion kept out of politics. As a result, it rapidly acquired great political power." Richard Seelye Jones, "A History of the American Legion" 1946.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jesse Kremer".

Rep. Jesse Kremer