

Republicans Ignore Pattern of Neglect At King Veterans Home

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Brandon Weathersby
Saturday, 03 September 2016 13:03

<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/veterans-012015-s5.jpg>



Walker Administration, Key GOP legislators in Madison Shrug Off Whistleblower Complaints, Shortfalls in Staffing, Funding, and the overall Quality of Care.

MADISON - This week, The Capitol Times exposed a long record of negligence at the Veterans Home in King, WI and a deeply troubling pattern of inaction by the Walker administration and key members of the Republican-led legislature. The expose raised serious questions about shortfalls in staffing, funding, and the overall quality of care, and why the GOP legislature turned a blind eye for so long.



"The news about the neglect at the King Veterans Home is deeply disturbing. I know from experience that when families transition their loved ones into assisted living facilities or nursing homes they expect their family member to receive the best care possible," Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair **Martha Laning** said on Thursday. "It is heartbreaking to know that veterans, who have sacrificed so much for this country, are not receiving the care they deserve."

According to reports, complaints from whistle-blowers and families of veterans in the home have persisted for years. These complaints prompted Senator Julie Lassa to request an audit in October of 2015, but her request was denied by Republicans on the Legislative Audit Committee. Sen. Lassa then wrote a letter to Gov. Walker in March of 2016 to the same effect and received a letter in response from the Department of Veterans Affairs, dismissing any reports of underperformance or neglect at the King Veterans Home.

It was not until The Cap Times expose was ready to be released to the public that some Republicans began to look into the issue. In fact, Republican Senator Luther Olsen, who acknowledged hearing about staffing concerns during his 12-year tenure in the state Senate, waited until the news story was about to break to call for an audit.

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Even worse, Olsen and fellow GOP lawmakers like Sen. Tom Tiffany who sit on the Joint Finance Committee voted to raid millions of surplus dollars from Veterans homes like the one at King, to fund other priorities in the 2015-17 budget.

“While veterans at the King home were forced to cope with brown water coming from their faucets and widespread outbreaks of illnesses, Republican lawmakers in Madison were turning a blind eye to the complaints while diverting critical funds elsewhere.” concluded Laning. “This is absolutely unacceptable, and it’s time for the people of Wisconsin to hold these elected leaders responsible for their negligence and misplaced priorities.”