

Services Best Delivered in Counties with Direct Veteran-to-Veteran Support

Written by Jon Erpenbach Press. State Senator 27th District

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County Veterans Service Officers are our most essential direct contact to veterans in Wisconsin, but the State DVA has targeted them and it needs to stop. Why this relentless attack on CVSO officers and veterans by the Wisconsin DVA?

MIDDLETON, WI - Veterans in Wisconsin need only to travel within their own county to have personal contact with another veteran helping navigate access to services. That office is the County Veterans Service Office by statute a “bricks and mortar” office where a veteran can receive support and assistance from another veteran.

CVSO's are our most essential direct contact to veterans in Wisconsin. Why are they under attack from the Department of Veterans Affairs and Secretary John Scocos? I have no idea, but I want it to stop.

CVSO's should have easier access to direct service connections with state and federal benefits, but instead, the Wisconsin DVA has been making it harder for CVSO's to help veterans. From limiting access to benefits programs to blocking grants without proper legal authority, the DVA has targeted CVSO's and it needs to stop.

There is no reason Wisconsin government should be trying to consolidate veterans services and make veterans travel farther for help, but that is exactly what the DVA is peddling in the Legislature.



I support expanding the role of CVSO's to help veterans; that is not only logical but good public policy. We have a public health crisis with delayed mental health services for veterans and their families and we should expand CVSO offices to help with this crisis.

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Why this relentless attack on CVSO officers and veterans by the Wisconsin DVA?

The answer to that question really doesn't matter. No state agency should stand in the way of community driven services for veteran-to-veteran counseling and benefit support.

If the DVA needs to cut their budget they should look to their own agency overhead rather than the small grants that CVSO's get from the state. Recent articles have cited that the DVA spends two dollars on administration costs for every dollar they spend on services; that certainly can be improved.

This should not be a war between the DVA and veterans receiving services in the community through their local CVSO office. Making it a war is a huge mistake for Wisconsin's veterans. I am hopeful Governor Walker and Legislative Republicans see through the bad public policies the DVA is putting forward trying to consolidate CVSO offices regionally, making veterans drive even further to receive help.

Regardless of the DVA's poor decisions, there are Legislators just like me committed to supporting county based veteran-to-veteran benefits support and counseling. But we need your advocacy help working together to stop this ridiculous policy push right now.

For more information on CVSO offices and how to get in touch with your Legislators contact my office at 888-549-0027 or 608-266-6670 or sen.erpenbach@legis.wi.gov

For more information on CVSO officers, check [here](#) .