



Your Liver. Your Life.

**WRITTEN STATEMENT
OF
AMY NELSON,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
THE AMERICAN LIVER FOUNDATION**

**PROVIDED TO
THE AGRICULTURE, VETERANS AND GAMING COMMITTEE
OF THE
MINNESOTA STATE SENATE**

March 13, 2006

On behalf of the American Liver Foundation, I would like to express our thanks for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of S.F. No. 1678.

I am providing testimony on behalf of the American Liver Foundation (ALF) – the nation’s leading non-profit organization promoting liver health and disease prevention. The Foundation provides research, education and advocacy for those affected by liver disease, including hepatitis.

One of the most serious public health problems that Minnesota faces – as does the rest of the United States – is hepatitis C, an “emerging infectious disease.” This public health problem is one of the central issues addressed by the American Liver Foundation (ALF).

I am honored to represent ALF regarding S.F. No. 1678, with a request that you support this bill, which is designed to provide educational materials which will help us all in the fight to make the residents of Minnesota – and in particular our veterans – more aware information about the disease which is so crucial.

The American Liver Foundation’s Minnesota Chapter is based in the Twin Cities area. As we pursue our mission for the State, advocating for hepatitis C patients and hepatitis C awareness clearly is one of ALF’s core tasks.

Today,

- Four million Americans have hepatitis C and most don’t know it.
- Ten thousand hepatitis C patients die every year in the United States.
- Hepatitis C is the leading cause of liver transplantation.

Hepatitis C is a disease that affects everyone – all races, men, women and children. It mirrors America and it mirrors the State of Minnesota ...doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants, agricultural workers, and even soccer moms. However, it is important to recognize that some populations are more vulnerable to chronic hepatitis C than others, for example:

- 1.8% Overall U.S. population
- **8-10.0% Veterans**
- 3.5% Overall population between the ages of 35-55
- 1.5% White
- 3.2 % African-American
- 2.1% Mexican-American.

Certainly, hepatitis C is a major, well documented health challenge for certain high risk groups, and most especially U.S. veterans.

Hepatitis C is a serious, potentially life-threatening condition. Studies have shown that treatment can succeed in a great number of patients. And even for those who do not respond to treatment, it is important that they become aware; today, there are interventions that can significantly slow down the progression of hepatitis C damage to the liver. It is, of course, paramount that patients have access to treatments and interventions in as timely a manner as is possible. This is why it is so important for all Minnesotans – and especially those who are most highly at risk for hepatitis C (including veterans) – to have compelling and current information about the disease, how it is spread, how it is detected, and how it may be treated.

For this reason, we encourage you to offer your full support to S.F. No. 1678 and all other legislation aimed at providing prompt, thorough information about hepatitis C to veterans and others who are at high risk for the virus.

The American Liver Foundation is pleased to be an involved organization representing the citizens of Minnesota who are affected by liver disease, and we strongly support all measures that help our fellow Minnesotans to be stronger and healthier for the future. We welcome the opportunity to work with the commissioner of veterans affairs to provide life-saving information to our neighbors throughout the state.

Finally, we thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on such an important issue of public health.

"Attachment B"

From: <ShadyManandGal@aol.com>
To: <sen.becky.lourey@senate.mn>
Date: Sun, Mar 12, 2006 8:31 PM
Subject: HCVand Vets

Hello, my name is John Moore I am a Veteran with Hep-c., thank you for all your past support for Vets. I want you to know that I support S.F. No.1678 . I am to sick for treatment but not sick enough for a transplant. I hope for a cure. I feel that the VA and all the Dr's., and nurses are doing a great job, but like everything else it takes money and the help of our leaders. Thank you ..

John

Senator Lourey introduced--

S.F. No. 1678: Referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming.

1 A bill for an act

2 relating to health; requiring the commissioner of
3 veterans affairs to develop and make available
4 educational materials regarding hepatitis C; proposing
5 coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 196.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

7 Section 1. [196.28] [HEPATITIS C EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS.]

8 The commissioner of veterans affairs shall develop and make
9 available to physicians, other health care providers, veterans,
10 and other persons at high risk for hepatitis C (HCV) educational
11 materials, in written and electronic forms, on the diagnosis,
12 treatment, and prevention of HCV. The educational materials
13 shall include recommendations of the federal Centers for Disease
14 Control and Prevention and any other person or entity having
15 knowledge on HCV, including the American Liver Foundation. The
16 materials shall be written in terms understandable by members of
17 the general public.

"Attachment C"



Senator Dennis Frederickson

**Brown County
Soldiers Rest
S.F. No. 2749**

Senator Frederickson & members of this hearing: Greetings from the snowed-in-south!

Towering over New Ulm's Cemetery stands the proud, life size bronze replica of a World War I soldier. A rifle is clutched in his left hand and his right is raised as he tosses a grenade. Locally known as "The Doughboy," he keeps watch of comrades who served together and have chosen to remain together in eternal peace in a uniquely special cemetery called Soldiers Rest.

Brown County is the only county in the state and believed to be the only county in our great nation that purchases and provides burial plots to our veterans and their spouses. We have Soldiers Rest sections in three cities. This is made possible through the statute that we are discussing today and the generosity of our taxpayers.

Private Henry Meier, a Doughboy himself was laid to rest in grave number 1 on October 15th, 1946. Mrs. Francis Rieger, a 53-year old spouse was laid to rest this morning. Her burial marks the 798th plot purchased by Brown County. Think of the burden that would be placed on Fort Snelling or Camp Ripley if Brown County did not provide for our own.

In essence, burial plots are real estate, and real estate costs (especially in cemeteries) never goes down, rather they go up. In Brown County plot costs are up over 220% in the past four years. \$3500 bought 14 plots in 2002; 9 last year; and 6 today.

Last year we lost 46 veterans with one-third choosing to use a Soldiers Rest plot. 15 spouse plots were reserved as well. To date we have lost 18 veterans with half choosing Soldiers Rest. The Veterans Administration predicts a peak in deaths by 2008; I believe we have already begun the steep climb towards that summit.

A fixed allocation, divided by skyrocketing plot prices, plus a death rate known only to God is an unsolvable equation that will be eliminated by supporting this bill.

In addition to my comments I have brought along supporting documents from the Brown County Board of Commissioners and the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

I would like to thank the member of this committee for allowing me to share my opinions today.

Sincerely,

Greg Peterson

Greg Peterson
Brown County Veterans Service Officer

**RESOLUTION NO. 2006-08
BROWN COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

The following Resolution was offered by Commissioner Berg and moved for adoption at a Regular Meeting held on March 7, 2006, at the Brown County Courthouse, New Ulm, MN:

WHEREAS, Minnesota State Statutes 2004, Section 375.36, Subdivision 1 currently limits expenditures to a \$3,500.00 maximum for purchasing cemetery plots designated as Soldier's Rest;

WHEREAS, Brown County designates financial resources as required to purchase Soldier's Rest cemetery plots;

WHEREAS, plot prices have steadily increased over the past four years in excess of 220%, thereby limiting the amount of plots that Brown County can purchase under the current statutory limit for free burials extended to veterans and their spouses;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Brown, State of Minnesota, strongly supports the passage of proposed legislation authored by Senator Dennis Frederickson to eliminate the yearly spending limit in its entirety, thereby extending the flexibility of Brown County to purchase plots for Soldier's Rest to meet the demand of veterans deaths which continues to increase every year.

Seconded by Commissioner Wellner and the same being put to a vote was duly carried.

This Resolution shall become effective immediately and without publication.

Adopted by the following vote: Ayes 5 Nays 0

Dated this 7th day of March, 2006.

Charles Grogan
Chairman, Brown County

ATTEST:
Charles Enter
Administrator, Brown County

CERTIFICATION

State of Minnesota)
County of Brown)

I, Charles Enter, duly appointed, qualified and acting County Administrator for the County of Brown, State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of a Resolution with the original minutes of the proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, Brown County, Minnesota, at their session held on the 7th day of March, 2006, now on file in my office, and have found the same to be a true a correct copy thereof.

Witness my hand and official seal at New Ulm, Minnesota, this 7th day of March, 2006.


Charles Enter
County Administrator

Greg Peterson
Brown County
14 S. State Street
New Ulm, MN 56073-0248

RE: Support of Proposed Legislation

I, as President of the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers, fully support the proposed legislation to eliminate the yearly spending limit in its entirety from the Minnesota State Statutes 2004, Section 375.36 Subdivision 1.

Sincerely,


Theresa M. Anderson
President of the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers

Senators Frederickson, Vickerman, Belanger, Murphy and Pariseau introduced—
S.F. No. 2749: Referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming.

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to counties; removing limit in county expenditures for soldiers' rest;
1.3 amending Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 375.36, subdivision 1.

1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.5 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 375.36, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

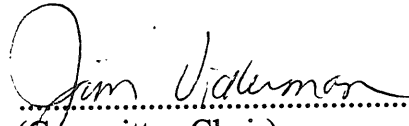
1.6 Subdivision 1. ~~\$3,500 yearly limit~~ **County powers; soldiers' rest.** A county board
1.7 may purchase a plot of ground in any duly organized cemetery lying, in whole or part, in
1.8 the county, or in a contiguous county, to be designated and used exclusively as a soldiers'
1.9 rest, ~~and~~. The county may appropriate money for its cost, embellishment, and upkeep, and
1.10 for the opening and the closing of graves in it, ~~not more than \$3,500 in any one year.~~

1.11 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

1.1 **Senator Vickerman from the Committee on Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming,**
1.2 **to which was referred**

1.3 **S.F. No. 1678:** A bill for an act relating to health; requiring the commissioner of
1.5 veterans affairs to develop and make available educational materials regarding hepatitis C;
proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 196.

1.6 Reports the same back with the recommendation that the bill do pass. Report
1.7 adopted.

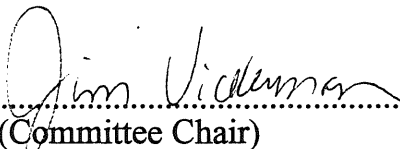
1.8 
1.9 (Committee Chair)

1.10 March 13, 2006
1.11 (Date of Committee recommendation)

1.1 **Senator Vickerman from the Committee on Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming,**
1.2 **to which was referred**

1.3 **S.F. No. 2749:** A bill for an act relating to counties; removing limit in county
1.5 expenditures for soldiers' rest; amending Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 375.36,
subdivision 1.

1.6 Reports the same back with the recommendation that the bill do pass and be placed
1.7 on the Consent Calendar. Report adopted.

1.8 
1.9 (Committee Chair)

1.10 March 13, 2006
1.11 (Date of Committee recommendation)