



## **Badger Firefighters Association**

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Consisting of fire departments from Washington, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Ozaukee and Sheboygan counties.

**TO:** Assembly Ways & Means Committee

**ATTN:** Representative Tim Ramthun

**REFERENCE:** AB 308 Tax Refund Check Off for Wisconsin Firefighters Memorial

**DATE:** November 26, 2021

We, as an association, appreciate your co-sponsor on this very important bill to keep the Wisconsin Firefighters Memorial [AKA Wisconsin Fire & EMS Memorial] in existence.

The Badger Firefighters Association wishes to express our support of this very important legislation [AB 308] at the hearing set for Tuesday morning, November 30, 2021.

This memorial which is located at the Ben Hanson Park in Wisconsin Rapids was designated as the location for a memorial to honor and remember those that have served and those that have died in the line of duty while serving their communities, 25 years by Governor Tommy Thompson. This memorial was built with donations, in-kind donations and with love and respect by many volunteers.

As a matter of fact the park lawn care, building maintenance and programs to honor our fallen brothers and sisters are still done with volunteers. EVERY week of the year there is a volunteer EMS or fire department that is responsible to keep this tribute in pristine condition.

There was an income tax refund check off option in place until 5 years ago to help pay off the loan it took to build the visitors center and do some other updates to the memorial. At this time there is a need to add to the Wall of Honor as there is no room to add names at this time. We already have 3 names from our state that need to be added that have died in the line of duty.

There is no tax dollars invested in the building or maintenance of this park by the city of Wisconsin Rapids, Wood County, or the state of Wisconsin. It is imperative that the income tax refund check off, provided in AB 308 be passed into law. If this legislation is not put into effect this memorial will become defunct in a few years due to the lack of funds to maintain this memorial to our hometown heroes.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary/Legislative Liaison

RJN