

Senator Working to Combat Stolen Valor in Iowa

Written by Sen. Shawn Hamerlinck
Thursday, 26 August 2010 14:26

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DIXON – After recent headlines of a court ruling in California that protects lying about military honors, Senator Shawn Hamerlinck (R-Dixon) filed legislation this week that prevents disingenuous Iowans from lying in order to profit from prestigious military awards, such as the Purple Heart.

In 2006 Congress passed the Stolen Valor Act which made it a federal crime to lie about receiving medals of honors from the United States military. On August 17th the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California ruled the Stolen Valor Act unconstitutional in a 2-1 vote citing it violates the First Amendment. The case is being appealed to the Supreme Court.

Appeals Judge Milan D. Smith wrote if the courts upheld the law, "then there would be no constitutional bar to criminalizing lying about one's height, weight, age or financial status on Match.com or Facebook, or falsely representing to one's mother that one does not smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, is a virgin, or has not exceeded the speed limit while driving on the freeway. The sad fact is, most people lie about some aspects of their lives from time to time."

"If upheld as it currently stands, it becomes acceptable for individuals to lie about military service and honors of valor in order to profit in some way," stated Senator Shawn Hamerlinck (R-Dixon). "Demoting the Congressional Medal of Honor, Navy Cross, Silver Star and Purple Heart to the weight recorded on a driver's license is appalling."

Per capita, Iowa has more active duty soldiers currently deployed than another other state in the nation. "In Iowa, those who volunteer for service are held at a higher regard than the credit offered by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California," Hamerlinck went on to say.

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“Knowing that the U.S. Supreme Court process could take another two years, I have filed a Stolen Valor Act in Iowa and am confident that it will be embraced by the Legislature and win approval in the upcoming session.”

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