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**SEN. SMITH’S STATEMENT REGARDING  
GOVERNOR EVERS’ VETO OF AB 249**

MADISON – Today, Governor Evers vetoed [Assembly Bill 249](#). This legislation would have made it more difficult for elected officials to make honorary designations of state highways or bridges by imposing stricter standards on who can be recognized. If passed, certain individuals or groups could have been disqualified from receiving this honor, despite exemplifying extraordinary public service.

AB 249 would have prevented the Ho-Chunk Code Talkers from receiving deserved recognition for their courageous military service in World War II. Yesterday, Senator Jeff Smith (D-Brunswick) introduced LRB-4916/1, legislation to designate I-90 as the Ho-Chunk World War II Code Talkers Memorial Highway.

In the 1800s, the U.S. government took Native American children from their homes and forced them to attend assimilation boarding schools. Despite these attempts to eradicate their culture, history and language, Native Americans have fought in the U.S. military in every major war.

Tens of thousands of Native Americans served in World Wars I and II. Native Americans often joined the U.S. military as code talkers, soldiers who developed secret battle communications using their Native languages.

In response to the Governor’s veto, Senator Jeff Smith (D-Brunswick) released the following statement:

“Governor Evers made the right call in vetoing Assembly Bill 249. In doing so, Wisconsin will continue recognizing the exceptional historical figures that shaped our state and country, including the World War II Ho-Chunk Code Talkers. Unfortunately, there is little recorded history of the Ho-Chunk Code Talkers’ noble efforts in the war. Governor Evers’ veto will allow Wisconsinites to learn of the dedicated public servants that lived in the state and encourage civic engagement.”

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*The 31st Senate District includes all of Buffalo and Pepin counties and portions of Trempealeau, Pierce, Dunn, Eau Claire and Jackson counties and very small portions of Chippewa and St. Croix counties.*