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Wednesday, February 28, 2007

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## **Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Scocos to be Deployed to Iraq**

### ***Governor Cites Scocos as Example of Wisconsin Servicemembers' Tremendous Service to the Nation; Highlights Importance of Strong Veterans Program***

Governor Jim Doyle and Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John Scocos today announced that Scocos, a Colonel in the United States Army Reserve with more than 27 years of active and reserve service, has received orders to deploy for active duty military service in Iraq.

"Secretary Scocos is just another example of the tremendous contributions that members of our military from Wisconsin are making, including the Guard and Reserves," Governor Doyle said. "This mobilization highlights the incredible importance of Wisconsin's great veterans programs and our continuing assistance to the families of those who are deployed. As Secretary Scocos heads to Iraq, he – and all the members of our Armed Forces and their families – can have confidence that we'll continue to ensure we have the best state veterans and military family programs anywhere in the nation."

"American service men and women from every walk of life have been called to serve in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other challenging duty assignments around the globe," said Scocos. "Like them, I am proud to continue my service to our nation and the people of this great state," he said.

Data provided by the U.S. Department of Defense show approximately 227,000 service members currently deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, with nearly one-third from the Reserves and National Guard.

Of the more than 3,000 troops from Wisconsin currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, the percentage of Guard and Reserve members is even higher, at about 40 percent.

"Military activation and deployment create many challenges for the families and communities of those who remain behind," said Scocos. "We have been proud to initiate programs like Mission: Welcome Home to assist our newest generation of returning veterans, and I have no doubt that my own first-hand experiences in Iraq will only help to further expand our department's awareness and outreach to our veterans and their families."

"Secretary Scocos has been doing an exceptional job in transforming the department and leading it into the 21st century to meet our veterans' needs," said Pete Moran, a Vietnam veteran from Superior, Wis. and Chair of the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs.

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“It will be challenging for us, and for his family while he is deployed,” said Moran, “but those challenges are no greater than the challenges faced by every employer, every community, and every family when these men and women are activated and deployed.”

“As with all our military men and women, we wish Secretary Scocos a safe and successful deployment, and a speedy return back to us,” added Moran.

In accordance with uniformed service employment laws and the rules governing the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, WDVA Deputy Secretary Bill Kloster will serve as the department’s acting secretary in addition to his current role until Scocos returns.

Neither Kloster, a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel with more than 20 years of active military service, nor the agency’s third in command, Anthony Hardie, a seven-year Army veteran with Persian Gulf War and Somalia service, have any remaining military service obligation.