

Tilson's bill passes Senate committee

It was a satisfying time for Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson recently.

He announced the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs passed his private members bill protecting war memorials and cenotaphs.

"I appeared before the Committee two weeks ago to defend my bill and I'm grateful to the Senators for their work on this legislation," Tilson said last Thursday. "Protecting our war memorials and cenotaphs from vandalism and desecration is very important, especially to our veterans and members of the Canadian Forces."

During his appearance, Tilson was joined by Orangeville Legion Sergeant-at-Arms Chris Skalozeb and retired Colonel Andrew Nellesstyn of the Ottawa area. Both men made impassioned statements on the need to strengthen the penalties for this profoundly disrespectful offence.

"I was honoured to have these two veterans appear with me. It drove home the seriousness of this issue," Tilson said. "Our veterans and Canadian Forces members look upon such acts of desecration as a grave personal attack."

The bill adds significant penalties to anyone convicted of mischief against a war memorial, cenotaph or similar structure designed to honour those who have died as a result of war. A minimum fine of \$1,000 would be imposed for a first offense, with a two week jail term for a second offense and a thirty day jail term for third and subsequent offenses.

Tilson added the Liberal Senators on the Committee attempted to gut the Bill by introducing amendments designed to remove the mandatory minimum fine. It is anticipated the bill will begin third and final reading in the Senate at some point this week.