

Tilson's bill passes the Senate

Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson has successfully put his private members bill through the Senate.

The Bill, aimed at protecting war memorials and cenotaphs from damage or vandalism, passed third reading in the Senate last week. Royal Assent is pending.

"It is an honour to finally have my Bill complete its final stage in Parliament," Tilson said. "This Bill will protect our war memorials and cenotaphs from vandalism and desecration which is vitally important, especially to our veterans and members of the Canadian Forces."

The process for Bill C-217 began just after the last election in June 2011, when it was first introduced in the House of Commons. In the intervening 35 months, C-217 has received many hours of discussion and debate in both the House of Commons and the Senate. Several veterans appeared with Tilson at Committee to support the legislation, including Chris Skalozub of the Orangeville Legion. "I want to thank all of those who have supported this legislation as it made its way through Parliament. I want to especially thank the veterans who appeared with me before the House and Senate Committees studying my Bill," Tilson commented last week. "It is a testament to how Members and Senators and all Canadians look upon such acts of desecration as a grave crime. It is fitting that the Senate passed my Bill just prior to the 70th anniversary of D-Day next week."

C-217 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 30-day jail term for third and subsequent offenses.