

**NOTE: This bill has been prepared for the signature of the appropriate legislative officers and the Governor. To determine whether the Governor has signed the bill or taken other action on it, please consult the legislative status sheet, the legislative history, or the Session Laws.**



HOUSE BILL 10-1104

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Looper, Apuan, Baumgardner, Court, DelGrosso, Fischer, Frangas, Gardner B., Gardner C., Kagan, Kefalas, Kerr J., King S., Labuda, Lambert, McFadyen, Middleton, Nikkel, Ryden, Schafer S., Solano, Stephens, Summers, Todd, Massey, Pommer, Primavera;  
also SENATOR(S) Williams, Penry, Boyd, Cadman, Heath, Hodge, Hudak, King K., Kopp, Morse, Newell, Romer, Sandoval, Scheffel.

CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A VETERANS  
TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM IN JUDICIAL DISTRICTS.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

**SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(a) Historically, the state of Colorado has honored the noble sacrifices that members of the military have made to protect our freedoms by providing veterans and members of the military certain benefits and rehabilitative services;

(b) Studies have shown that combat service may exact a tremendous psychological toll on members of the military who are faced with the

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*Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.*

constant threat of death or injury over an extended period of time;

(c) Researchers have shown that a significant number of the one million six hundred thousand members of the military who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan will suffer, as a result of their military service, mental health injuries, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, anxiety, and acute stress;

(d) Such combat-related injuries, including the use of drugs and alcohol to cope with such injuries, can lead to encounters with the criminal justice system that would not have otherwise occurred without the combat-related injury;

(e) While the vast majority of returning members of the military do not have contact with the criminal justice system, and most veterans and members of the military are well-adjusted, contributing members of society, psychiatrists and law enforcement officials agree that combat-related injuries have led to instances of criminality; and

(f) As a grateful state, we must continue to honor the military service of our men and women by attempting to provide them with an alternative to incarceration when feasible, permitting them instead to access proper treatment for mental health and substance abuse problems resulting from military service.

(2) Therefore, the general assembly finds that it is in the best interests of Colorado citizens to assist veterans and members of the military involved in the criminal justice system who have a military-related injury. In order to achieve this end, the general assembly encourages the establishment of veterans' treatment courts to address the unique challenges veterans face as a result of their honorable service.

**SECTION 2.** 13-3-101, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SUBSECTION to read:

**13-3-101. State court administrator.** (9) THE STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR IS AUTHORIZED TO SEEK FEDERAL FUNDING AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE COURT SYSTEM FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, MAINTENANCE, OR EXPANSION OF VETERANS' TREATMENT COURTS.

**SECTION 3.** Part 1 of article 5 of title 13, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to read:

**13-5-144. Chief judge - veterans treatment court authority.** THE CHIEF JUDGE OF A JUDICIAL DISTRICT MAY ESTABLISH AN APPROPRIATE PROGRAM FOR THE TREATMENT OF VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY.

**SECTION 4. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,

determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

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Terrance D. Carroll  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Brandon C. Shaffer  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE SENATE

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Marilyn Eddins  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Karen Goldman  
SECRETARY OF  
THE SENATE

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

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Bill Ritter, Jr.  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF COLORADO