

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 124

By Ragan

A RESOLUTION to honor Tennessee's veterans and service members and to urge the establishment of veterans treatment courts across Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the general assembly recognizes that veterans and service members have provided or are currently providing an invaluable service to our country. In so doing, some may suffer the effects of posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and depression, and may also suffer drug and alcohol dependency, addiction, or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse problems; and

WHEREAS, some veterans or service members come into contact with the criminal justice system and are charged with and/or convicted of felony or misdemeanor offenses; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need for the criminal justice system to recognize these veterans and service members, provide accountability for their wrongdoing, provide for the safety of the public, and provide for the treatment of veterans and service members; and

WHEREAS, the general assembly recognizes that permitting courts to retain flexibility will allow the courts to serve a larger number of veterans and service members; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby applaud Tennessee's judges for creating the existing veterans treatment courts and veterans court dockets and strongly urge the Tennessee Supreme Court to educate Tennessee's judges regarding the importance of providing assistance to Tennessee's justice-involved veterans and service members and to take appropriate measures to support the creation of new veterans treatment courts and dockets across Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage Tennessee's court personnel and other individuals with whom justice-involved veterans and service members may come into

contact to develop an efficient and cost-effective method of identifying arrestees who have served or are currently serving in the military.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also encourage Tennessee's courts to incorporate veteran-specific components into Tennessee's problem-solving courts and to serve veterans and service members in those courts if they would benefit from participating in such a court.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also encourage Tennessee's judges to create veterans treatment courts statewide if their screening processes indicate that the number of justice-involved veterans and service members in their judicial districts is such that the creation of such a court is necessary to adequately serve those veterans and service members in which case any justice-involved veterans and service members shall be served by an adjoining judicial district.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also encourage appropriate state agencies, Tennessee's judges, and other court personnel to seek federal funding as it becomes available for the establishment and subsequent operation of veterans treatment courts and veterans court dockets in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the chief clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit enrolled copies of this resolution to the Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court, the executive director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, the commissioner of the department of veterans affairs, and to every member of the Tennessee Congressional delegation.