



# American Judges Association

*The Voice of the Judiciary*

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## ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS

WHEREAS, when veterans return from combat, some turn to drugs or alcohol to cope with mental health issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or Traumatic Brain Injury; and

WHEREAS, an unfortunate number of veterans are entering the criminal justice system to face charges stemming from these issues; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Treatment Courts are hybrid Drug Courts and Mental Health Courts and have evolved out of the growing need for a treatment court model designed specifically for justice-involved veterans to maximize efficiency and economize resources while making use of the distinct military culture consistent among veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans have access to exclusive economic benefits and health services through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, State Departments of Veterans Affairs, County Departments of Veterans Affairs, and a variety of additional programs for veterans operated through Veterans Service Organizations at federal, state and local levels; and

WHEREAS, grouping justice-involved veterans into a specific court docket significantly expedites access to veteran-specific resources, including benefits and treatment, earned through military service; and

WHEREAS, veterans deeply value their military experience and share an inimitable bond among their peers and Veterans Treatment Courts build upon this camaraderie by allowing participants to go through the treatment court process with people who are similarly situated and have common past experiences, and pairing veterans with volunteer veteran mentors; and

WHEREAS, Justice For Vets, in coordination with the National Drug Court Institute, is ensuring Veterans Treatment Courts receive the proper training and technical assistance to be successful; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, The American Judges Association supports the continued growth of Veterans Treatment Courts as a vital court model for best serving this nation's justice-involved veterans in need of treatment and restoration; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the American Judges Association will work with Justice For Vets to this end.

*Adopted on September 15 at the 2011 Annual Conference in San Diego, California.*

*The independent organization for all local, state, provincial, and federal judiciary  
of judges—by judges—for judges*

*Serving the justice system since 1959*

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