

**CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES
CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS**

Resolution 7

In Support of Devoting Resources to Veterans Courts

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators, as judicial system leaders, have consistently supported the principles and methods used in problem-solving courts; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Treatment Courts, a variant of Problem Solving Courts, provide intervention, treatment and integrated services for veterans in the justice system who struggle with the effects of trauma; and

WHEREAS, this trauma includes Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, brain injury, mental illness, homelessness, and substance abuse issues; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Courts, under the criminal court model, are collaborations of traditional criminal justice practitioners who work together with community-based treatment providers to devise the best plan for recovery and to reduce the risk of recidivism for individuals; and

WHEREAS, there are 264 Veterans Courts in 37 states and 1 in Guam; and

WHEREAS, a unique component of most Veterans Courts is their integration with the United States Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which helps veterans involved in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the VJO program relies on Program Specialists who are licensed social workers, who identify veterans in jails and local courts, assess their health and social needs, and help develop a rehabilitation treatment program specific to the veteran's needs; and

WHEREAS, there are currently 260 Program Specialists in 167 VA medical centers nationwide; and

WHEREAS, our country has had an increased number of veterans who have exhibited some of the identified conditions at unprecedented levels and need VA-provided treatment and services; and

WHEREAS, there has never been a more critical time for supporting the brave men and women who have defended our country by ensuring their re-integration into society by providing Veterans Courts and VA-provided treatment services; and

WHEREAS, many states report that Veterans Courts will be limited in their effectiveness without increasing the number of Program Specialists; and

WHEREAS, S. 946, the Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act of 2017 would increase the number of Program Specialists to assist veterans involved in Veterans Courts throughout the nation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators reaffirm the commitment to the problem-solving court model, including Veterans Courts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conferences support the goals of S. 946, as it would increase the number of Program Specialists nationwide and allow Veterans Courts to more effectively serve our country's veterans.