



The Judiciary, State of Hawaii

Testimony to the House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts

Representative K. Mark Takai, Chair
Representative Ken Ito, Vice Chair

Wednesday, January 30, 2013, 8:30 am
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

by
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Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 196, Relating to Veterans Treatment Court.

Purpose: Appropriates funds for positions to support a veterans treatment court in the first circuit.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary strongly supports House Bill 196, which appropriates funds for positions within the Judiciary, Office of the Public Defender and the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney.

With federal grant monies, the Judiciary along with its stakeholders (Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of the Attorney General, Office of the Public Defender and Department of the Prosecuting Attorney) have worked in collaboration with each other, which resulted in the VTC holding its first hearing on January 4, 2013, and admission of its first clients on January 11, 2013.

In addition to dedicated full-time positions for the Office of the Public Defender and the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, this bill requests funds for a dedicated VTC probation officer within the First Circuit. Federal grant monies awarded currently only provide for the funding of a VTC Coordinator (Coordinator), which is necessary to coordinate VTC program activities and treatment services for its clients. Currently, the Coordinator works with multiple probation officers to coordinate services and treatment for its clients. As caseload is expected to increase, a dedicated probation officer would allow the VTC to better serve its clients in such



Bill No. 196, Relating to Veterans Treatment Court
Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs &
Culture and the Arts
January 30, 2013
Page 2

activities as attending court/team meetings, tracking client progress and providing the intensive supervision that is an important element of treatment courts. Without this position this role of oversight, court attendance and tracking as well as working with multiple probation officers to coordinate client supervision and activities will fall to the Coordinator, which will reduce the Coordinator's effectiveness in overall VTC program management and may affect the VTC's ability to meet its objectives in helping its clients achieve success in this court as well as possible growth and expansion of the VTC.

The Judiciary also recognizes that the VTC, with its weekly team meetings and hearings and more intensive client oversight, places additional need for resources from both the Office of the Public Defender and the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney. Therefore, this bill also requests funding to address their resource needs relative to their specific agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 196.