

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 691, MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE  
VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, & CULTURE  
AND THE ARTS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN  
DIRECTOR OF STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

February 02, 2017  
9:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and members of the Committee:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of the concepts in House Bill 691.

This measure appropriates funds to the Judiciary and the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu to support the Veterans Treatment Court.

The OVS supports the concepts and intent expressed in this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families.



## *The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i*

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

Representative Ken Ito, Chair  
Representative James Kunane Tokioka, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 02, 2017, 9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 429

by  
Sidney Nakamoto  
Probation Administrator, First Circuit

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**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 691, Relating to Making Appropriations for the Veterans Treatment Court.

**Purpose:** Appropriates funds to the Judiciary and the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu to support the Veterans Treatment Court.

### **Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary strongly supports House Bill 691, which appropriates funds to the Judiciary to support the First Circuit's Veterans Treatment Court.

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, to form the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) which held its first hearing on January 4, 2013, and admitted its first clients on January 11, 2013. Currently the VTC has 24 clients participating in the program and 22 graduates since inception. The majority of these clients have multiple mental health diagnoses related to their military service and also have a long history of substance abuse and criminal behavior.

Presently the VTC has a supervisor and probation officer position that are full-time permanent positions under the Judiciary. The original grant funds of \$190,000 that has expired were expended utilizing the same service contracts as the Adult Client Services Branch (ACSB), thus creating a strain on existing resources. Measurements of success include the number of referred clients who successfully: complete the assigned treatment program (to include substance



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abuse and mental health), transition out of a residential treatment program (includes finding clean and sober housing and employment), and who ultimately complete the VTC successfully.

If funds are provided through this measure, the Judiciary will use the funding to cover long-term residential treatment with a mental health component, short-term residential treatment, and housing. The cost for residential treatment is \$180 per day, \$5,580 per month, for a total of \$33,480 for a six month treatment episode at a long-term residential facility. We are requesting \$234,360 for treatment providers and an additional \$10,000 for temporary housing. Since there is more than one residential treatment program with existing purchase of service (POS) contracts with ACSB, we would not be funding individual contracts, but rather the number of treatment days to be purchased from a variety of vendors.

Some of the veterans receive some financial benefits from the VA and if a portion of those funds are used to self-pay, it is estimated that the VTC can provide adequate services with an annual treatment budget. The Judiciary is requesting support for the Veterans Treatment Court budget of \$244,360 which is part of the Judiciary's 2017-2019 Biennium Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 691.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
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**THE HONORABLE KEN ITO, CHAIR**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY,**  
**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS & CULTURE AND THE ARTS**  
**Twenty-Ninth State Legislature**  
**Regular Session of 2017**  
**State of Hawai'i**

February 2, 2017

**RE: H.B. 691; MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE VETERANS TREATMENT COURT.**

Chair Ito, Vice-Chair Tokioka, and members of the House Committee on Veterans, Military, International Affairs and Culture and the Arts, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") submits the following testimony in strong support of H.B. 691.

The purpose of House Bill 691, is to provide adequate funding for Veterans Court, including dedicated funding for the Department to provide services for the program. This funding is necessary to allow our Department to assign a deputy prosecuting attorney to Veterans Court cases and court appearances—a deputy who could otherwise be handling a 'regular' caseload and 'regular' courtroom, to spread out the caseload for our other deputies—and also requires a significant amount of work-hours from our support staff. To date, no additional funding has been provided for this added responsibility, from any source, and this has presented a significant hardship for our Department.

**We kindly request a technical amendment on p. 1, lines 14-15 to read: “The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of the prosecuting attorney of the city and county of Honolulu for the purposes of this Act.”**

Since the Judiciary first implemented Veterans Court in 2013, our Department has done its best to actively participate in this specialty court, in a concerted effort to provide veterans with the care they need, while also addressing their offenses and minimizing recidivism. In order to sustain our Department's participation in Veterans Court, and for all of the foregoing reasons, the Department respectfully asks that H.B. 691, be passed with an appropriation of \$65,000 and our suggested technical amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
David Fukuzawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am in support of this bill. As both a disabled veteran and also as a state certified substance abuse counselor who worked for several years in the field both in the private sector and for the State of Hawaii, Dept. of Public Safety believe in the benefit of providing these substance abuse services for veterans who get in trouble with the law.