



THE JUDICIARY, STATE OF HAWAII

**Testimony to the House Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business,
& Military Affairs**

Representative Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Representative Isaac W. Choy, Vice Chair

Tuesday, January 26, 2010, 8:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

by
Thomas R. Keller
Administrative Director of the Courts

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 1942, Relating to Veterans Court

Purpose: Establishes a temporary Hawaii Veterans Court within the Judiciary to help address prison overcrowding.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary appreciates the intent of House Bill No. 1942, but concludes that drug court and other services currently available are sufficient and, therefore, opposes House Bill No. 1942.

House Bill No. 1942 would establish a veterans court within the current circuit courts to address legal and treatment issues faced by veterans. However, the issues could be addressed through the treatment courts, most notably the drug and mental health courts, and through the various diversion programs, if those programs were adequately funded. Creating another court will exacerbate, not solve, funding issues because it will divert resources into administration and management that could be used for monitoring and treatment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

LATE TESTIMONY

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES
TESTIMONY ON H.B. No. 1942, RELATING TO VETERANS COURT
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION, BUSINESS, & MILITARY
AFFAIRS

January 26, 2010

Good morning Chair Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice-Chair Isaac W. Choy, and members of the House Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business, & Military Affairs.

I am Mark Moses, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to support H.B. 1942. This measure provides for the establishment of a temporary Veterans Court in Hawaii. As noted, this concept has been instituted in several States and has proven to be successful in dealing with veterans for various issues, monitoring their progress towards rehabilitation, and reducing the number of veterans who are incarcerated, thereby reducing our overall prison population.

We suggest that the definition for veteran be expanded, the present definition was created for individuals who served after September 7, 1980, and therefore Vietnam, World War II, and Korean War veterans are not included in this revised definition. The definition should read: "Veteran" is a person who served on active duty, to include Reservist and National Guard members who served for the full period for which they were federally activated and were released honorably."

We defer to the agency with direct responsibility for implementation of the Veterans' Court program.

The OVS supports this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Hawaii's veteran community.

I will respond to questions from the committee.

OAHU VETERANS COUNCIL

"a gathering place for veterans"
OAHU VETERANS CENTER

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January 24, 2010

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TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HOUSE BILL 1942
RELATING TO VETERANS COURT

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION, BUSINESS &
 MILITARY AFFAIRS**

HEARING TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2010, 8:30 AM, ROOM 312

Aloha Chair Representative Angus L.K. McKelvey, Representative Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee. My name is Fred Ballard, President Oahu Veterans Council. The Oahu Veterans Council is comprised of over 35 Oahu veteran organizations that in turn represent over 80,000 veterans and their families. The Council voted unanimously at its meeting last Saturday, January 23rd to communicate our complete support of House Bill 1942.

The concept of Veteran Courts has been embraced by states and counties across America with success. It is only right that Hawaii with its large military population establish Veteran Courts to assist military personnel to deal with their problems through treatment and counseling, and at the same time be held accountable for their acts.

The Oahu Veterans Council strongly supports the passage of House Bill 1942.

Mahalo for allowing us the opportunity to testify in support of this very important bill.

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 Oahu Veterans Council

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