

HCS HB 547 -- VETERAN TREATMENT COURTS

SPONSOR: Griffith

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 17 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 0.

Currently, treatment court divisions oversee veterans treatment courts, adult treatment courts, DWI courts, family treatment courts, and juvenile treatment courts. This bill would require each circuit court to establish a treatment court division. However, if it is not feasible to establish a veterans treatment court, the court may refer veterans to any existing court within its jurisdiction until there are enough resources to establish a veterans court.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that these veterans go to battle and end up with PTSD and end up addicted to drugs, but they need to be looked at differently than other people in drug court. This changes veterans' lives. There are at least 300 veterans in each county in the state so this really needs to get done. These veterans need our help. They are federal employees with federal benefits, so there should be some money coming in that would help get this implemented. It should not be that some circuits have veterans courts and others do not.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Griffith; American Civil Liberties Union; Missouri Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; Jason Howe; and Hal Dulle.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.