

HCS HB 82 -- TREATMENT COURTS

SPONSOR: Griffith

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 10 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 82.

This bill requires all circuit courts to establish a treatment court division before August 28, 2027, which can include a mental health treatment court in order to provide an alternative for the judicial system to dispose of cases stemming from a mental health disorder or co-occurring disorder. Additionally, each treatment court division must have a veterans treatment court.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that veterans are able to get records expunged through a veterans' treatment court. It is a wonderful option and some witnesses were under the impression that every circuit had one of these courts; however, there were several "deserts" on a map where there were no such courts. For some veterans, if they want to participate in a veterans' treatment court, they have to take off work and drive long distances to participate. Some of the veterans are being charged to attend this court, but that is not fair for many veterans because the cost is not consistent across counties. Veterans' courts, as opposed to drug courts more broadly, are geared toward veterans who suffer from PTSD or some other mental health issue resulting from service. One-third of veterans report some sort of arrest history compared to one-fifth of the general population. Studies have shown the positive results from veterans' treatment courts. Treatment courts generally reduce recidivism, and it helps keep mothers and fathers with their kids and contributing to their communities. Every one dollar invested in treatment court yields a savings of \$12 to the State from savings in incarceration costs.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Griffith; Arnie Dienoff; Patrick Benson; Gwen Smith, Empower Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.