

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 29

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTI

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblyman VINCENT MAZZEO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI

District 33 (Hudson)

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Urges New Jersey Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Task Force to support adoption of Veterans Treatment Courts.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging the New Jersey Post Traumatic
2 Stress Disorder Task Force to support the adoption of Veterans
3 Treatment Courts.
4
5 **WHEREAS**, In 2012 this Legislature established a task force to study
6 the treatment of veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress
7 disorder (PTSD) in judicial proceedings; and
8 **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Veterans PTSD Task Force was created to
9 identify and review the issues and concerns facing veterans of the
10 United States Armed Forces and New Jersey's National Guard who
11 have been diagnosed with PTSD and how that diagnosis has
12 impacted their treatment in judicial proceedings; and
13 **WHEREAS**, The Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) model is based on
14 drug treatment courts, where substance abuse and mental health
15 treatment are offered as an alternative to incarceration and,
16 typically, veteran mentors assist with the programs; and
17 **WHEREAS**, The VTC model starts with the premise of providing
18 veterans involved in the criminal justice system with programs and
19 services to overcome the challenges they face; and
20 **WHEREAS**, A VTC System in New Jersey would maximize utilization
21 of Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' (DMVA)
22 resources and ensure that veterans are getting the treatment they are
23 owed; and
24 **WHEREAS**, According to current research, nine percent of the people
25 involved in the New Jersey criminal justice system, or nearly
26 12,000, are veterans and though a large majority (82 percent) of
27 these veterans are eligible for DMVA services, 18 percent do not
28 have access to these services; and
29 **WHEREAS**, Veterans Administration professionals and other
30 professional counselors and health care professionals are available
31 at no cost to the judicial systems, and have been utilized efficiently
32 in many other venues and jurisdictions; and
33 **WHEREAS**, According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs,
34 New Jersey is home to 413,000 veterans, the 19th highest state
35 veteran population in the nation, yet New Jersey remains one of
36 only a handful of states without a VTC; and
37 **WHEREAS**, More than 250 VTCs exist across the nation and
38 approximately 32 states have already adopted such VTCs, and New
39 Jersey lags grievously behind in adopting such a program, thus
40 denying their veterans the justice and gratitude they have earned for
41 keeping their fellow New Jerseyans safe; and
42 **WHEREAS**, VTCs recognize the tremendous service that the service
43 members of our Armed Forces provide to our Country; now,
44 therefore,
45
46 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
47 *Jersey:*

1 1. This House recognizes the work of the New Jersey Veterans
2 Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Task Force and urges the
3 Task Force find in favor of establishing a Veterans Treatment Court
4 System in New Jersey.

6 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
7 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
8 members of the New Jersey Veterans PTSD Task Force and to the
9 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs as staff to the Task
10 Force urging them to support a Veterans Treatment Court System in
11 New Jersey.

16 This Assembly Resolution requests the New Jersey Veterans
17 Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Task Force to find in favor
18 of establishing a Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) System in New
19 Jersey.

The New Jersey Veterans PTSD Task force was created to study the treatment of veterans diagnosed with PTSD in judicial proceedings. The VTC System provides veterans who are involved with the criminal justice system with programs and services to overcome the challenges they face and to receive the treatment they are owed. In New Jersey, approximately 12,000 veterans are involved in the criminal justice system. Approximately 32 states have adopted the VTC System, making New Jersey part of the minority of states that have yet to adopt it.