HLS 12RS-2850 ORIGINAL

Regular Session, 2012

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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 105

BY REPRESENTATIVE LORUSSO

VETERANS: Requests the La. Dept. of Veterans Affairs to study the feasibility of Veterans Treatment Courts

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2	To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs to study Veterans
3	Treatment Courts and the feasibility of creating and implementing such courts in the
4	state of Louisiana.
5	WHEREAS, military veterans have served their country and this great state; and
6	WHEREAS, as a result of their service, many veterans suffer combat-related trauma
7	and experience a higher rate of substance abuse and mental health issues; and
8	WHEREAS, sometimes, these substance abuse and mental health issues manifest
9	themselves in criminal acts both great and small; and
10	WHEREAS, state court judges are joining with local prosecutors, public defenders,
11	United States Department of Veterans Affairs officials, and local lawyer volunteers to create
12	courts with veterans-only case proceedings, because they have seen a common thread of
13	post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, head injuries, and mental illness
14	underlying crimes committed by veterans; and
15	WHEREAS, Judge Robert Russell, presiding judge of the Buffalo Drug Court and
16	Buffalo Mental Health Court, created the nation's first Veterans Treatment Court in January
17	of 2008, in response to the growing number of veterans appearing on the dockets who were
18	addicted to drugs or alcohol or suffering from mental illness; and
19	WHEREAS, the widespread growth and early success of Veterans Treatment Courts
20	has led a number of states to introduce legislation pertaining to veterans in the criminal
21	justice system and establishing Veterans Treatment Courts, and most recently, California,

1 Colorado, Illinois, Oregon, and Virginia have passed similar legislation establishing 2 Veterans Treatment Courts; and 3 WHEREAS, it is imperative that the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs 4 conduct a study regarding the creation and implementation of a Veterans Treatment Court 5 in this state: and 6 WHEREAS, the study should highlight the increasing needs and advantages for 7 additional dockets to accommodate Veterans Treatment Courts, to assist in rehabilitating those service members who will be returning from Afghanistan and Iraq in the immediate 8 9 future, and to provide them with the opportunity to live a sober and stable life while 10 restoring their military honor and their commitments to family and community; and 11 WHEREAS, any such study of a Veterans Treatment Court program must promote 12 a non-adversarial approach within its framework and build awareness of the important 13 advantages to adopting such a court system. 14 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby 15 urge and request the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of 16 Veterans Treatment Courts and the feasibility of creating and implementing such courts in 17 the state of Louisiana. 18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that other entities are urged to participate in this 19 study, including but not limited to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the 20 Louisiana Supreme Court, the Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of

Criminal Justice, the Louisiana State Bar Association, the Louisiana District Attorneys
Association, and the Louisiana Public Defender Board.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the

secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

Lorusso HCR No. 105

Requests the La. Dept. of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of Veterans Treatment Courts and the feasibility of creating and implementing such courts in the state of La.