

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE
Fiscal Note



Fiscal Note On: **HB 272** HLS 15RS 786
 Bill Text Version: **ENGROSSED**
 Opp. Chamb. Action:
 Proposed Amd.:
 Sub. Bill For.:

Date: May 7, 2015 12:04 PM	Author: BILLIOT
Dept./Agy.: District Courts	Analyst: Zachary Rau
Subject: Veterans Court Eligibility	

VETERANS EG SEE FISC NOTE GF EX See Note Page 1 of 1
 Amends eligibility requirements to participate in the Veterans Court program

Proposed law expands the eligibility for the Veterans Court program to include some violent offenses listed in RS 14:2(B), excluding homicide and offenses that warrant the defendant registering as a sex offender. Proposed law revokes eligibility for a Veterans Court if the defendant has a prior felony conviction for homicide, or any other ongoing proceedings alleging commission of homicide or any sex offense which warrants the defendant registering as a sex offender.

EXPENDITURES	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	SEE BELOW					
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	SEE BELOW					
Local Funds	SEE BELOW					
Annual Total						
REVENUES	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Funds	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	\$0
Annual Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION

This bill may result in an indeterminable increase in local and federal expenditures and a potential decrease in SGF expenditures. The bill expands the criteria for which veterans may be eligible for the Veterans Court program. To the extent a Veterans Court has additional hearings as a result of the expanded criteria in the proposed legislation, the district courts may likely experience an increase in expenditures.

A Veterans Court is a specialized court docket (like drug courts) established by the individual judicial districts that under present law focuses on veterans who have been charged with a nonviolent crime as a result of drug or alcohol addiction or mental health illness. The proposed legislation expands the pool of eligible participants to defendants who committed certain types of violent crimes listed in R.S. 14:2, excluding homicide and offenses that warrant a defendant registering as a sex offender. Currently the 1st (Caddo), 24th (Jefferson), and 41st (Orleans) district courts have Veterans Courts. Veterans Courts admit defendants to the program on a discretionary basis, which will limit the financial exposure to local governmental entities.

The 24th JDC's Veterans Court is fully funded with federal grants, while the 1st and 41st JDCs' courts are funded using a combination of federal and local monies. There are various federal resources available from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Justice for Vets program in the form of grants and local program training to help fund and start veterans court programs.

Medical services for participants are provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). To the extent the veteran is eligible for USDVA benefits, then USDVA would provide the treatment services the veteran needs. Services are only provided at VA medical centers and clinics. There are 3 VA medical centers in the state (Shreveport, Alexandria, and New Orleans) and 15 clinics throughout the state.

To the extent an offender, who is a veteran, completes the program and is not sentenced to jail, the Department of Corrections (DOC) would not pay \$24.39 per day to house the offender in a local facility. However, if the offender does not complete the program and is ordered to serve time in jail, DOC would recognize a cost of \$24.39 per day for housing the the offender at the local level.

REVENUE EXPLANATION

There is no anticipated direct material effect on governmental revenues as a result of this measure.

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| <u>Senate</u> | <u>Dual Referral Rules</u> | <u>House</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S} |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S&H} | | | <input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(F)(2) >= \$500,000 Rev. Red. to State {H & S} |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S&H} | | | <input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S} |

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