



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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RICHMOND, VA 23219

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American Legion
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Korean War Veterans
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Legion of Valor of the
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Marine Corps League
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Officers Association
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National Association for
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Navy Seabee Veterans of
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Non-Commissioned
Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
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Reserve Officers Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines Association*

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Position Paper 2016-09 Veterans Dockets

- 1. Objective:** to allow local courts to establish a Veterans Docket under the supervision of the Virginia Supreme Court to adjudicate non-violent cases involving eligible veterans who meet specific criteria.
- 2. Background**
 - a. Veterans Dockets are specialized court dockets, operating within the judicial system, that treat offending veterans who meet specific criteria. Judicial and medical monitoring is required for the health of the veteran and her/his safe return to society.
 - b. Veterans Dockets help eligible veterans with their otherwise non-treated problems, which could include: post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), combat or military-related trauma, or medically-diagnosed persistent traumas including mental health or substance abuse issues.
 - c. Veterans Dockets address and treat the underlying military service-connected factors that led to criminal behavior and reduce recidivism rates while enhancing public safety and promoting offender accountability.
 - d. Veterans Dockets do not grant veterans a different standard of justice; rather, Veterans Dockets focus on connecting veterans with available support and the assistance they need.
- 3. Discussion:**
 - a. Virginia veterans who carry the invisible wounds of military service, and who come in contact with the law, should be recognized as needing special assistance.
 - b. The goal of Veterans Dockets are to serve the community and increase public safety by integrating and incorporating a coordinated treatment response for justice-involved veterans with substance abuse and/or mental health issues with the goal of returning productive, law-abiding citizens to the community.
 - c. In other states with Veterans Dockets, incarceration costs are significantly reduced, as are recidivism rates.
 - d. Veterans Dockets allow judicial monitoring of corrective treatment and supervision for those veterans who have special conditions and needs based on military service, mental illness, substance addictions, or difficulty in societal re-entry.
 - e. Oversight of Veterans Dockets is the purview of the Virginia Supreme Court, which would be responsible for overseeing and approving: 1) training for judges who preside over Veterans Dockets; 2) judicial oversight and technical assistance; 3) distribution of funds to support administration of Veterans Dockets; 4) training for Veterans Docket administrators, case managers/mentors, and treatment services providers; and 5) evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the dockets.
- 4. Recommendation:** That the Governor and General Assembly take the legislative and/or budget actions necessary to allow local courts to establish a Veterans Docket under the supervision of the Virginia Supreme Court.