

HB 2239 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Judiciary

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Meeting Dates: 2/4, 4/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Defines veteran for purposes of this provision. Requires each judicial district to provide any veteran charged with a crime access to a court program specifically designed to address the needs of veterans. Provides that upon successful completion of any veterans' court program the court may consider a defendant's motion for dismissal of the charges.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Directs the Oregon Judicial Department to establish a centralized veterans treatment court that counties may opt into beginning July 1, 2023. Requires the Department to report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to the judiciary regarding any legal or statutory authorizations necessary for, and obstacles to establishing the centralized veterans treatment court as described no later than October 1, 2021 and report on the costs related to establishing the centralized veterans treatment court as described, no later than October 1, 2022. Declares an emergency effective on passage.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon revised statute 3.450 governs the implementation of specialty court programs that provide individualized treatment for substance abuse issues. The program requires an individual to report regularly and provide progress updates to court. The program provides a local drug court team, consisting of the court, agency personnel and treatment and service providers who assist in supervising program participants. Some jurisdictions have expanded treatment courts to provide specialty programs tailored towards veterans who have been charged with a crime. These programs may provide access to alternative sentencing opportunities to veterans whose substance abuse issues or mental health needs and demonstrate a nexus between their military service and criminal charges.

HB 2239 would require all judicial districts to provide access to a specialty veterans' court program to eligible veterans.