



Legislation Text

File #: RES 13-91, **Version:** 1

Supporting the Ramsey County Veterans Justice Initiative.

WHEREAS, American active, reserve and national guard military veterans have served their Country in numerous wars, conflicts and other traumatic events; and

WHEREAS, many of these veterans return home with the internal wounds of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, depression, anxiety, chemical dependency, mental health issues, and other debilitating conditions which may follow a traumatic event; and

WHEREAS, exposure to a traumatic event can indirectly lead to criminal behavior through coping actions such as self-medication or hyper-vigilance, or through direct lineage of a traumatic incident to a specific crime; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota law recognizes the importance of recognizing a veteran's status early in the criminal justice process; and

WHEREAS, jurisdictions across the State are in the process of implementing a Veterans Court Track or already have a Veterans Court Track; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Court Tracks have proven to promote sobriety, recovery, and stability through a coordinated response and collaboration between health care providers, veterans organizations, criminal justice partners, and the Veterans Administration; and

WHEREAS, the Ramsey County Veterans Justice Initiative is a hybrid drug and mental health court track that serves qualified veterans who are struggling with addiction and/or mental illness by diverting them from the traditional criminal justice track into a specialized Veterans Court Track; and

WHEREAS, the Ramsey County Veterans Justice Initiative's target population is qualified veteran offenders charged with misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, and felony offenses that do not call for a mandatory or presumptive prison commitment; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul has jurisdiction to prosecute both misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor criminal charges committed within the City of Saint Paul; and

WHEREAS, any successful Veterans Justice Initiative in the jurisdiction will require the participation and commitment of the City of Saint Paul and specifically the Saint Paul City Attorney's Office; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul recognizes and appreciates the sacrifice and long-term effects that military service has had on our community, our veterans, and their families; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul believes qualified veterans should have the opportunity to participate in the Ramsey County Veterans Justice Initiative; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul believes that the Ramsey County Veterans Justice Initiative will be good for

public safety, the community, for veterans, and their families; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul City Attorney's Office is directed to become full and active participants in the creation and success of a Ramsey County Veterans Justice Initiative; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul City Attorney's Office should work with the Second Judicial District Courts, the Ramsey County Attorney's Office, the Prosecuting Attorneys of other municipalities within the District, the Veterans Administration, Ramsey County Community Corrections, Defense Attorneys representing Veterans, Veterans' rights organizations, and other partners to create this new specialty court track; and be it

FINALLY RESOLVED, the Saint Paul City Attorney's Office should reasonably use its discretionary powers to encourage treatment over incarceration for qualified veterans whose criminal offenses are linked to their psychological injuries, and who present minimal risk to public safety.