

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2016

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman,
Commerce, Justice Science Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member,
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Fattah,

More than two million young men and women have served our country in Iraq and Afghanistan, and many face a difficult readjustment to civilian life after serving overseas. According to the RAND Corporation, one in five veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan will experience a stress-related mental illness, and many others fall victim to drug and alcohol abuse. The symptoms and subsequent behavior associated with post-traumatic stress, mental illness, drug abuse and alcohol dependency bring many of these veterans into contact with the criminal justice system. Veterans account for nine out of every 100 inmates in U.S. jails and prisons.

Troubled veterans deserve a chance to break free of the cycle of dependency and mental illness. That's why in 2008 a judge in Buffalo, New York opened the nation's first veterans treatment court. Modeled on the successful drug courts program, veterans treatment courts divert offenders from the traditional criminal justice system. Veterans treatment courts promote sobriety, recovery and stability through a coordinated response that involves cooperation and collaboration with the traditional partners found in drug and mental health courts. The courts are also teaming up with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs health care networks, the Veterans Benefits Administration, volunteer veteran mentors and family support organizations.

Veterans treatment courts have already developed a track record for low recidivism rates. More than 200 veterans treatment courts have opened since 2008, and more are slated. The subcommittee's allocation of \$5 million for veterans treatment courts grants in fiscal year 2016 matched the highest federal allocation of resources for this important program. We commend you for your efforts and continued support of veterans treatment courts.

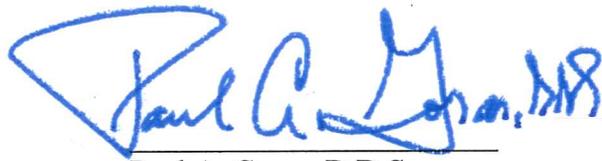
We respectfully request a robust level of funding for veterans treatment courts in the fiscal year 2017 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations bill. The Department of Justice uses these funds to provide important grants to help veterans treatment courts around the country.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



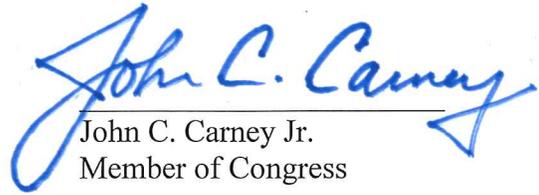
Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
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