

**Veterans Court Program
VCSO Response Summary
3/30/2010**

YES	TOTAL: 10
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Bexar	Harris
Dallas	Hidalgo
Denton	Orange
El Paso	Tarrant
Fannin	Travis

NO	TOTAL: 153
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Andrews	Comanche	Fort Bend	Hopkins	Leon	Motley	Sabine	Waller
Archer	Concho	Franklin	Houston	Liberty	Navarro	San Jacinto	Ward
Atascosa	Coryell	Gaines	Hudspeth	Limestone	Newton	San Patricio	Wharton
Baylor	Cottle	Gillespie	Hutchinson	Lipscomb	Nolan	Scurry	Wheeler
Bee	Crockett	Goliad	Irion	Llano	Oldham	Shackelford	Wilbarger
Bell	Crosby	Gonzales	Jack	Loving	Panola	Shelby	Willacy
Borden	Culberson	Gray	Jackson	Lubbock	Parmer	Sherman	Williamson
Bosque	Dallam	Gregg	Jeff Davis	McMullen	Pecos	Somervell	Winkler
Brewster	Dawson	Hale	Jones	Madison	Potter	Starr	Wise
Callahan	Delta	Hall	Kaufman	Marion	Presidio	Sterling	Wood
Camp	Dickens	Hamilton	Kent	Martin	Rains	Stonewall	Young
Carson	Duval	Hansford	Kerr	Mason	Randall	Sutton	Zapata
Cass	Eastland	Hardeman	Kimble	Matagorda	Reagan	Swisher	Zavala
Castro	Ector	Hardin	King	Medina	Real	Terrell	
Chambers	Ellis	Harrison	Kleburg	Menard	Red River	Terry	
Cherokee	Erath	Hartley	Knox	Milam	Reeves	Throckmorton	
Clay	Falls	Haskell	Lamb	Mitchell	Roberts	Titus	
Collin	Fisher	Hays	La Salle	Montague	Robertson	Trinity	
Collingsworth	Floyd	Hemphill	Lavaca	Montgomery	Runnels	Upshur	
Colorado	Foard	Hill	Lee	Morris	Rusk	Upton	

NO RESPONSE/STILL REVIEWING	TOTAL: 89
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Anderson	Briscoe	Comal	Garza	Jim Hogg	Maverick	San Saba	Washington
Angelina	Brooks	Cooke	Glasscock	Jim Wells	Midland	Schleicher	Webb
Aransas	Brown	Crane	Grayson	Johnson	Mills	Smith	Wichita
Armstrong	Burleson	Deaf Smith	Grimes	Karnes	Moore	Stephens	Wilson
Austin	Burnet	DeWitt	Guadalupe	Kendall	Nacogdoches	Taylor	Yoakum
Bailey	Caldwell	Dimmit	Henderson	Kinney	Nueces	Tom Green	
Bandera	Calhoun	Donley	Hockley	Lamar	Ochiltree	Tyler	
Bastrop	Cameron	Edwards	Hood	Lampasas	Palo Pinto	Uvalde	
Blanco	Childress	Fayette	Howard	Live Oak	Parker	Val Verde	
Bowie	Cochran	Freestone	Hunt	Lynn	Polk	Van Zandt	
Brazoria	Coke	Frio	Jasper	McCullouch	Refugio	Victoria	
Brazos	Coleman	Galveston	Jefferson	McLennan	Rockwall	Walker	

Development of Houston Veterans' Court

- Incarcerated Veterans
- Suicide Rates in Returning Veterans
- PTSD in Returning Veterans
- Why we need Veterans' Courts
- Importance of Community Partnerships
- Unique Features of Houston Court
- Status Report
- Clean Up

Facts Regarding Incarcerated Veterans

- 9.3% of people incarcerated are Vets
 - (Dept of Justice, 2002)
- At a minimum, 90,000 Vets are released from jails annually; 29,000 from prisons
- 82% are eligible for VA services
- 70% non-violent crime offense
- 60% have a substance dependency
- > 30% have serious mental illness
- 20% homeless year prior to incarceration
- 60% have a serious medical problem (AIDS, Hep C, TB)

Suicide and the Veteran National Statistics on Suicide

- The Center for Disease Control's National Violent Death Reporting System demonstrated that 21-25% of all suicides are among the veteran population.
- A 2007 mortality study of 320,890 men found that veterans were twice as likely to die of suicide compared with non-veterans in the general population (Kaplan, et al. 2007)

Returning Veterans and Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder

- The Military's Mental Health Advisory Team V found that 15-20% of all soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan show signs of depression or PTSD (increases to 30% for those with 3-4 deployments).

▪ (Source: USA Today, [A Fifth of Soldiers at PTSE Risk](#), March 7, 2008 , Greg Zoroya)

Returning Veterans and Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder

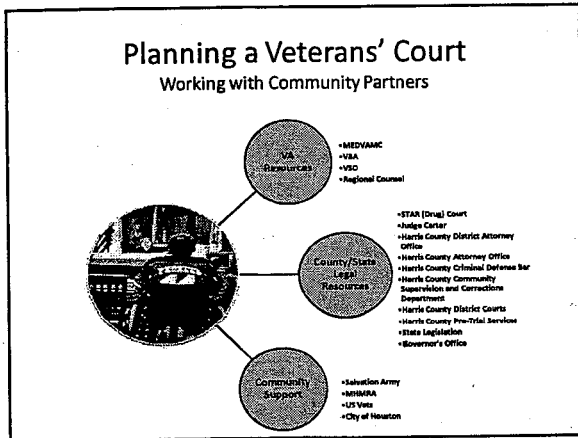
- A study on 2,863 soldiers from 4 Army combat infantry brigades surveyed 1 year after Iraq found 16.6% met the screening criteria for PTSD (Hoge, C. et al., 2007)

Why Houston Needs a Veterans' Court



- Number of incarcerated veterans has increased*
- Pretrial Services estimates between 350 to 450 vets booked into Harris County jail each month. Many for minor non-violent crimes
- 25% of veterans incarcerated in local jails have mental illness vs. 15% of nonveteran population*
- Harris County Jail -25% of detainees with mental illness**
- Veterans make up approximately 1/5 of Houston's homeless population, estimate some 3000 homeless veterans in Houston

* From: Bureau of Justice Statistics' Special Report: Veterans In Prison and Jail (2000)
 ** From: MHMRA (2009)



- ### Planning and Implementation of Veterans' Court
- Unique Features of Houston Court
- Development of Jail Diversion Treatment Team (*Pilot - 6 months*)
 - Accept Variety of Offenses
 - Accept Variety of Diagnoses

- ### Planning and Implementation of Veterans' Court
- Veteran Eligibility Criteria for Court
- Defendant must meet the following criteria:
 - Honorable Discharge, on active duty or in reserves
 - Have pending eligible misdemeanor or felony offense
 - Be a legal resident of/ or citizen of the United States of America
 - Be a resident of Harris and/ or surrounding Counties
 - Have mental health, TBI, and/ or substance use diagnoses
 - Criminal offense must be related to the diagnosis
 - Exclusions:
 - Pending case is either; Sexual offenses, drug delivery or all 3G offenses with the exception of aggravated assault.
 - Prior conviction or deferred adjudication for sexual assault or 3G offense with the exception of aggravated assault.
 - Is seriously and persistently mentally ill and cannot participate
 - Has previously been terminated or graduated from Veterans' Court

Houston Veterans' Court

Current Status of 12 Veterans

Category	Count	Category	Count	Category	Count	Category	Count
• 5 OEF/OIF		• 3 Probation Violations		• 7 Deferred Adjudication		• 10 Dual Diagnoses (Substance Use Disorder and Primary Mental Health Diagnoses - PTSD, Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar)	
• 4 Persian Gulf		• 3 Assault		• 4 Pretrial Diversion		• 1 Psychotic Disorder	
• 2 Post-Vietnam		• 4 Possession		• 1 Probation		• 1 Substance Use Disorder	
• 1 Vietnam		• 1 Forgery				• 2 Traumatic Brain Injury	

Clean Up

- Jurisdiction for Misdemeanors and Felony offenses
- Less restrictive language to best meet the needs of veterans and the criminal justice system
- Language to include the possibility of violent offenses

President –
Hon. Judge Ruben Reyes
Lubbock County
806-775-1023

Vice President –
Hon. Judge Robert Anchondo
El Paso County
915-834-8232

Secretary –
David Slayton
Lubbock County
806-775-1020

Treasurer –
Roberto Ruiz
Bexar County
210-335-2571

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Travis County
512-476-8595

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Angelina County
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Dallas County
214-712-3055

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Harris County
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Hon. Judge Al Alonso
Bexar County
210-335-2571

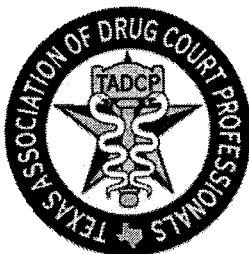
Debbie Fesperman
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903-813-4215

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Travis County
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Judge John Miller
Bowie County
903-798-3527

Jay Nye
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March 29, 2010

Honorable Leticia Van de Putte
Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs
& Military Installations
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711-2068

Honorable Rodney Ellis
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711-2068

Honorable Allen Vaught
Room E2.414
Capitol Extension
Austin, TX 78701

Re: Veterans Court Forum

Dear Honorable Senators and Representative:

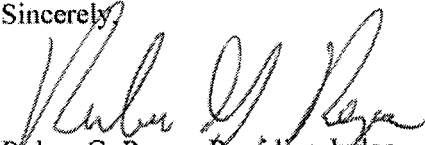
I was pleased to see that you are hosting a Veterans Court Forum on March 30, 2010, at the Capitol. As you know, serving our veterans and military personnel is a charge that we all should take very seriously, especially when those veterans have issues that can be addressed through problem-solving courts. TADCP is committed to assisting courts across our state in establishing and improving veterans courts in Texas. TADCP members from Harris County will be present at your forum to present more information on these courts. In addition, TADCP is already planning our 2010 Annual Training Conference that will be held in El Paso on October 5-7. At the conference, there will be sessions dedicated solely to training problem-solving court personnel on the importance of and steps to implementation of veterans courts.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of TADCP, thank you for your leadership in this area. We look forward to working with you in the future on these important issues.

While I am unable to attend your forum due to a conflicting court schedule this week, please know that you have my full support. I anticipate that many members from TADCP will be present at the forum, and I look forward to receiving a good report from those in attendance.

If I can be of further assistance to you or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 806-775-1023 or by email at reyes@co.lubbock.tx.us.

Sincerely,


Ruben G. Reyes, Presiding Judge
72nd District Court and President of TADCP