

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 09 2011

RE: S.B. No. 254  
S.D. 1

Honorable Shan S. Tsutsui  
President of the Senate  
Twenty-Sixth State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2011  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations, and  
Military Affairs, to which was referred S.B. No. 254 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO VETERANS COURT,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish a  
temporary Veterans Court at the state circuit court level.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure  
from one state branch of government, one state agency, and two  
community organizations.

Your Committee finds that after September 11, 2001, members  
of the United States Armed Forces and Reserves and the Hawaii  
National Guard were engaged in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq at  
an unprecedented pace. Recent research confirms that a  
significant number of soldiers--by some estimates, one in five--  
return home from war with a combat-related mental health  
condition, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain  
injury, sexual trauma, substance abuse, or other mental and  
emotional health conditions. In addition, judges in Hawaii have  
reported an increase in cases that involve veterans.

The first Veterans Court was established in 2008 in Buffalo,  
New York. Similar models have subsequently emerged across the  
country. The goal of these courts is to enhance the effectiveness  
of the criminal justice system through early intervention and  
specialized services to guide the veteran through rehabilitation



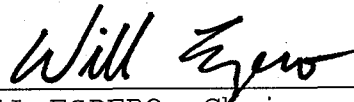
and counseling. Testimony of the Judiciary indicated that the Judiciary convened a Veterans Court Review Committee in May 2010 to review the issues involved in implementing a Veterans Court.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2012, to allow the Veterans Court Review Committee and the Judiciary time to complete its review and continue collaborations with stakeholders and to allow for further amendments of this measure during the 2012 Regular Session;
- (2) Extending the repeal date of this Act by one year, from June 30, 2020, to June 30, 2021; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations, and Military Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 254, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 254, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Judiciary and Labor.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Public Safety,  
Government Operations, and  
Military Affairs,



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WILL ESPERO, Chair



The Senate  
 Twenty-Sixth Legislature  
 State of Hawai'i

**Record of Votes**  
**Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations, and**  
**Military Affairs**  
**PGM**

Bill / Resolution No.:* <b>SB 254</b>	Committee Referral: <b>PGM, JOL, WAM</b>	Date: <b>2-3-11</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
ESPERO, Will (C)	/			
KIDANI, Michelle N. (VC)	/			
BAKER, Rosalyn H.	/			
RYAN, Pohai				/
SLOM, Sam				/
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>			<b>2</b>
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: <div style="text-align:center; font-family: cursive; font-size: 1.2em;">Michelle N. Kidani</div>				
<b>Distribution:</b> Original     Yellow     Pink     Goldenrod File with Committee Report     Clerk's Office     Drafting Agency     Committee File Copy				

\*Only one measure per Record of Votes