



*The Judiciary, State of Hawaii*

**Testimony to the  
House Committee on Veterans, Military and International Affairs,  
and Culture and the Arts**

Representative K. Mark Takai, Chair  
Representative Ken Ito, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 5, 2014, 8:30 am  
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

by  
Cheryl Marlow  
Acting Deputy Chief Court Administrator, First Circuit

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**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 1883, Making an Appropriation for the Veterans Treatment Court.

**Purpose:** Appropriates funds to support the Veterans Treatment Court.

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary strongly supports House Bill No. 1883, which appropriates funds to the Judiciary to support the First Circuit's Veterans Treatment Court.

The Judiciary along with its stakeholders (Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of the Attorney General, Office of the Public Defender and Department of the Prosecuting Attorney) have worked in collaboration with each other, to form the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) which held its first hearing on January 4, 2013, and admitted its first clients on January 11, 2013. Currently the VTC has twelve clients. The majority of these clients have multiple mental health diagnoses related to their military service and also have a long history of substance abuse and criminal behavior.

In addition to the VTC Coordinator and the Judge, the VTC team consists of a dedicated Public Defender, Prosecuting Attorney and Veterans Affairs Officer. The legislature previously appropriated a position for the VTC Coordinator but did not fund this position. Currently the



House Bill No. 1883, Making an Appropriation for the Veterans Treatment Court.  
House Committee on Veterans, Military and International Affairs,  
and Culture and the Arts

February 5, 2014

Page 2

position is being funded through federal grant monies. This grant is currently in the second year of its three year duration.

If funds are provided through this measure, the Judiciary will use the funding to cover the established Coordinator position, as well as establish two additional permanent positions, a necessary Probation Officer position and a Circuit Court Clerk, to assist with the calendars of the VTC as well as the Mental Health Court. Both of these courts hold a weekly calendar and when at capacity, have a combined client total of 75 which stretches the judicial clerk resources in both of the courts. The VTC caseload is continuing to increase and a dedicated probation officer would allow the VTC to better serve its clients in such activities as coordinating services and treatment for clients; attending court/team meetings; tracking client progress; and providing the intensive supervision that is an important element of treatment courts. Without this Probation Officer position, this role of oversight, court attendance and tracking, and coordinating client supervision and activities that will fall to the Coordinator, which will reduce the Coordinator's effectiveness in overall VTC program management and may affect the VTC's ability to meet its objectives in helping its clients achieve success in this court as well as possible growth and expansion of the VTC.

The Judiciary's only concern regarding this bill is to ensure that because the funding amount identified constitutes an addition to the original Judiciary budget request contained in House Bill No. 1638, this addition does not come with a corresponding reduction to any items already included in our base budget request. If the Legislature is inclined to move forward with this funding, we would respectfully request that the bill be amended to include language that provides funding for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) social worker V (\$53,364), and the authorization and funding to establish two additional permanent positions: (1) one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) social worker IV (\$47,400) and (2) one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) circuit court clerk 1 (\$37,968), for a total cost of \$138,732.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1883.

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1883  
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE VETERANS TREATMENT COURT  
PRESENTED TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS &  
CULTURE AND THE ARTS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN  
DIRECTOR OF THE STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

February 5, 2014

Good morning Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito and Committee members:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity **to support** House Bill 1883. This measure would appropriate funds to support the Veterans Treatment Court in Hawaii.

The Veterans Treatment Court (VTCs) under the leadership of First Circuit Court Judge Ed Kubo has treated 10 defendants in its first year of operation. The need to fully fund full-time employment (FTE) authorizations is paramount as more attorneys submit application for their clients to participate in the program.

This program has very low recidivism rates, has garnered successes in dealing with veterans for various issues, and has established viable monitoring links towards rehabilitation. Over 100 VTCs across the nation have experienced a reduced number of repeat offenders, thereby reducing our overall prison population.

We defer to the agency with direct responsibility for implementation of the Veterans' Treatment Court program.

The OVS supports the concepts and intent expressed in this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2015.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families.

**Roxanne Kamalu**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 04, 2014 2:59 PM  
**To:** vmitestimony  
**Cc:** abbycutter@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1883 on Feb 5, 2014 08:30AM\*

**HB1883**

Submitted on: 2/4/2014

Testimony for VMI on Feb 5, 2014 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Abigail Cutter	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**Roxanne Kamalu**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 04, 2014 12:04 PM  
**To:** vmitestimony  
**Cc:** sonnyfernan@msn.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1883 on Feb 5, 2014 08:30AM

**HB1883**

Submitted on: 2/4/2014

Testimony for VMI on Feb 5, 2014 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Stanley Y. Fernandez Sr.	Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States	Support	No

Comments: In full Support of HB1883. This measure will definitely help and support many of the veterans who suffer from TBI and Post traumatic stress who fell on the wayside as a result of their experiences in war.

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Date: February 2, 2014

To: The Honorable K. Mark Takai, Chair  
The Honorable Ken Ito, Vice Chair  
Committee on Veterans, Military, and International Affairs, and Culture and the Arts

From: Mike Golojuch, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Chair, Advisory Board on Veterans' Services

Subject: Support for HB1883

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As the current Chair, Advisory Board on Veterans' Services, let me state that we support HB1883, so funds are available to support the veterans' treatment court. Judge Kubo, locally, and other jurisdictions across the nation have found these treatment courts to be extremely beneficial. It allows veterans who have run into trouble since discharge to get the treatment they need and still be held accountable for their actions.

In most cases it turns out to be a win-win situations where the veteran becomes a productive member of the civilian community and the courts have few future problems from troubled veterans.

I strongly urge that you pass this measure and make funds available.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the views of the Advisory Board.

**Roxanne Kamalu**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 04, 2014 11:50 AM  
**To:** vmitestimony  
**Cc:** KehaulaniLum@Ameritech.net  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1883 on Feb 5, 2014 08:30AM

**HB1883**

Submitted on: 2/4/2014

Testimony for VMI on Feb 5, 2014 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kehaulani	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha! Please support HB 1883, which provides funding to augment the Veterans Treatment Court. This is a vital method to prevent homelessness or help homeless vets receive services they need to navigate thru the legal system. It is an Aloha practice. Mahalo nui loa, Kehaulani Lum

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**PARTNERS IN CARE**  
**Oahu's Coalition of Homeless Providers**

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*Partners in Care is a coalition of Oahu's homeless service providers, government representatives and community stakeholders working together to end homelessness. We believe that partnerships and collaboration are essential.*

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1883: MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE VETERANS TREATMENT COURT**

TO: Representative K. Mark Takai, Chair; Representative Ken Ito, Vice Chair; and Members, Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts

FROM: Peter K. Mattoon, Partners In Care, Advocacy Committee Co-Chair

**Hearing: Wednesday, February 5, 2014; 8:30 am; CR 312**

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and Members, Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts :

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1883, which appropriates funds to support the Veterans Treatment Court. I am Peter Mattoon, Partners In Care Advocacy Committee Co-Chair.

Partners in Care is a coalition of care providers and stakeholders focusing on the needs of homeless persons and strategies to end homelessness. Homelessness among veterans is an issue that needs to be addressed. It is a priority on the national level and Partners in Care believes this bill could be a local strategy to assist homeless veterans to become stable and integrated back into our community.

This bill addresses the wider issue of all veterans who have served our country but who now may face legal challenges. The Veterans Treatment Court would provide early intervention and diversion from incarceration. It would provide individualized assessments of problems, including those related to substance abuse. It would provide judicial tracking and monitor treatment participation so that veterans do not fall through the cracks. It would also encourage veterans to take responsibility for their actions and implement strategies to successfully reintegrate back into their communities.

We cannot disregard the special needs of our veterans. This bill would provide specialized services to help rehabilitate veterans and navigate the complex legal system successfully.

We urge your support for funding for the Veterans Treatment Court.

Contact PIC Advocacy Co-Chairs: Jenny Lee, [jenny@hiappleseed.org](mailto:jenny@hiappleseed.org), 587-7605; Peter Mattoon, [peter.mattoon@catholiccharitieshawaii.org](mailto:peter.mattoon@catholiccharitieshawaii.org), 527-4745; or Betty Lou Larson, [bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org](mailto:bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org); 585-6983/ 373-0356.

PARTNERS IN CARE c/o Aloha United Way  
200 North Vineyard • Suite 700 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96817





PROTECTING HAWAII'S OHANA, CHILDREN, UNDER SERVED, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

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Alan Shinn  
Laura Smith*

TO: Representative K. Mark Takai, Chair  
Representative Ken Ito, Vice Chair  
Members, Committee on Veterans, Military, & International  
Affairs, & Culture and the Arts

FROM: Scott Morishige, Executive Director, PHOCUSED

HEARING: House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs,  
& Culture and the Arts

**Wednesday, February 5, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. in Conf. Rm. 312**

**Testimony in Support of HB1883, MAKING AN  
APPROPRIATION FOR THE VETERANS TREATMENT  
COURT.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of HB 1883, which would appropriate funding to the Veterans Treatment Court in Hawaii. PHOCUSED is a statewide coalition of health, housing, and human services organizations committed to strengthening policies and programs that benefit the marginalized and underserved in Hawaii.

According to the National Alliance on Homelessness, Hawaii has the highest rate of homelessness in the nation. In 2009, a survey published by the VA's Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Group (CHALENG), found that there were up to 800 homeless veterans in the state of Hawaii. Veterans represent a disproportionate amount of our homeless population. It is critical that we act as a community to address this issue.

The Veterans Treatment Court will provide individualized assessment of problems, judicial tracking and monitoring of treatment participation while encouraging successful reintegration into society. The court provides necessary early intervention and rehabilitation to veterans, particularly those that are homeless. Veterans Treatment Courts have a proven track record of success; the original court in New York, now a system of ten courts, has a recidivism rate of just 1% for its participants.

Once again, PHOCUSED **strongly urges your support** of this bill to appropriate funds to the Veterans Treatment Court.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact PHOCUSED at 521-7462 or by e-mail at [admin@phocused-hawaii.org](mailto:admin@phocused-hawaii.org).

**Testimony to the House Committee on Veterans, Military and  
International Affairs, and Culture and the Arts**

**Wednesday, February 5, 2013**

**8:30 AM**

**Conference Room 312**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1883, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE  
VETERANS TREATMENT COURT**

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and members of the committee.

My name is Charles Ota and I am the Vice President for Military Affairs at The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (The Chamber). I am here to state The Chamber's *support* of House Bill No. 1883, Making An Appropriation For The Veterans Treatment Court.

The measure requests that funds out of the general fund be appropriated for the veterans' treatment court (VTC) in fiscal year 2014-2015. The sum is to be expended by the judiciary for purposes of this act.

The judiciary has recognized the proven effectiveness of the veteran's treatment court system, as initiated by the court system in Buffalo, New York in 2008. The idea has been adopted by many of the states, especially those such as Hawaii that have a high concentration of military veterans.

The VTC system has been established in Hawaii and is currently in operation and providing vital services to veterans deserving of mentorship services. This measure recognizes the societal benefits of this proven program and will provide the funding necessary to sustain operations.

In light of the above, we recommend the measure be approved.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## Testimony

Carswell J. Ross, Jr. M.A., Chief Master Sergeant, USAF Ret.  
94-1020 Puana Street  
Waipahu, HI 96797

Wednesday, February 05, 2014

Testimony on House Bill 1883, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE VETERANS  
TREATMENT COURT

Presentation to the House Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs & Culture  
and the Arts

Good morning Chair K. Mark Takai and Vice Chair Ken Ito and members of the Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs & Culture and the Arts.

I strongly **support** HB 1883, which appropriate and unspecified amount of funds to support the veteran's treatment court. This type of court has demonstrated its success in various other states and counties who have adopted this framework. The idea was conceived by Judge Russell of New York when he saw the difference in posture of veterans who were identified as veterans and counseled by other veterans.

The goal of the veteran's treatment court is to give veterans the tools and counseling necessary to restart their lives in a positive mode. Hawaii's veteran's treatment court has experienced success by having a high success rate. The veterans' community has come forward and provided volunteer mentors for the courts participants. State funds are will spent on this program.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1883: MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

TO: Representative K. Mark Takai, Chair; Representative Ken Ito, Vice Chair; and Members, Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts

FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawaii

**Hearing: Wednesday, February 5, 2014; 8:30 am; CR 312**

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and Members, Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1883, which appropriates funds to support the Veterans Treatment Court. I am Betty Lou Larson, the Legislative Liaison at Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii's Housing Placement Services have been assisting homeless veterans and their families to obtain and maintain permanent housing for many years. Through various programs including the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), Housing Placement Program (HPP) and Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program (SSVF), veterans have received financial assistance along with supportive case management from our agency.

Although many veteran consumers of Catholic Charities Hawaii programs have experienced success in ending their homeless plight, there are many more who have not been able to access assistance due to legal and or mental health issues. In 2006, one in four veterans aged 18-25 met criteria that suggested substance abuse. A report published in 2000 by the Bureau of Justice Assistance found that 81% of all justice-involved veterans had a substance abuse problem prior to incarceration. Thirty-Five were identified as suffering from alcohol dependency, 23% had been homeless in the prior year, and 25% were identified as mentally ill.

The Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) has built upon the positive experience Hawaii has had with treatment courts including the Hawaii Drug Court (HDC) program and the Mental Health Court (MHC) program. The VTC has drawn on the strengths and lessons learned from these other specialty courts while providing a unique treatment program tailored to the needs of our veterans. These unique features include, but are not limited to, a strong partnership with the Veterans Administration (VA) who will come to the court to assess discharge status, benefit eligibility, etc. The VTC also provides a mentor program developed with the VA that matches the veteran with a mentor of the same war, same branch of service and same rank. In addition, the VTC also provides targeted treatment for veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) since the HDC and MHC rule out clients with TBI.

The Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) is currently funded by a federal grant that covers only a portion of the costs incurred to run this program. Additional funding will allow the VTC to hire additional staff to support the two who currently administer the VTC and ultimately will help more of our wounded warriors to achieve stability and obtain and maintain long-term housing.

