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DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY
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**NOTICE TO THE BAR
FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

District of New Jersey Launches Veterans Court to Support Veterans in Legal System

A new Veterans Court pilot program has been launched by the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey offering much-needed support and services to veterans navigating the federal criminal justice system. The primary goal of this judge-involved program is to provide comprehensive resources for veterans facing legal challenges. The Veterans Court will focus on addressing the unique challenges veterans face and aims to provide a path toward rehabilitation rather than incarceration, assisting veterans in resolving and overcoming legal issues by connecting them with specialized resources.

The Veterans Court program is a “problem-solving” court designed to meet the needs of veterans who are facing criminal charges that are related to issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), substance abuse, and other mental health concerns that are often a result of their military service. The program offers a collaborative approach, bringing together judges, attorneys, probation and pretrial services officers, veteran service organizations, and mentors to provide a comprehensive system of support for participants.

Program Features:

Veteran-Centered Approach: The program is tailored to the unique needs of veterans, with a focus on addressing underlying conditions such as PTSD and substance abuse that may contribute to criminal behavior.

Comprehensive Support Services: Participants will have access to counseling, mental health services, addiction treatment, job training, housing assistance, and educational programs designed to help veterans reintegrate into civilian life.

Mentorship and Peer Support: Veterans will be paired with mentors who have firsthand experience navigating similar challenges, creating a supportive environment for their rehabilitation.

Court Supervision: Veterans participating in the program will be monitored by a dedicated Veterans Court judge, while under the supervision of United States Pretrial Services or United States Probation officers ensuring accountability and progress as they work through their recovery and legal issues.

Collaboration with Veterans Organizations: The program collaborates with the Veterans Administration and local veteran organizations to provide additional resources and support, creating a strong community for veterans both inside and outside the courtroom.

“Veterans have sacrificed so much for our country, and it’s our responsibility to ensure they receive the support they need when transitioning back to civilian life,” said Judge Zahid N. Quraishi the presiding judge of the Veterans Court pilot program in the Trenton vicinage. “As a veteran, I was honored to work with my colleagues and members of the federal family to develop this pilot program which recognizes the unique struggles veterans face and offers a compassionate, constructive solution that prioritizes their well-being and rehabilitation.”

The Veterans Court program is open to veterans who meet eligibility criteria, including those facing non-violent criminal charges. The goal of the program is to reduce recidivism rates and help veterans achieve long-term success in both their legal matters and their personal lives.

Chief Judge Renée Marie Bumb noted “The District of New Jersey is committed to ensuring justice and fairness for all individuals while providing tailored programs to support the unique needs of various populations. The launch of the Veterans Court program reflects our Court’s continued dedication to implementing a balanced approach to the federal criminal justice system for those who have served our country.”

The implementation of the Veterans Court pilot program is now one of three specialty courts initiated by the federal court in New Jersey. It joins the ReNew Court, the district court’s reentry court program, and the Pre-Opportunity Program or POP, the federal drug court. For further information on the Veterans Court or other programs, please visit the Court’s website at www.njd.uscourts.gov.