



## Judicial Council of California

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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RONALD M. GEORGE  
*Chief Justice of California*  
*Chair of the Judicial Council*

WILLIAM C. VICKREY  
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*Chief Deputy Director*

CURTIS L. CHILD  
*Director, Office of Governmental Affairs*

May 4, 2010

Hon. Felipe Fuentes, Chair  
Assembly Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 1925 (Salas), as amended April 20, 2010 – Fiscal Impact Statement

Dear Assembly Member Fuentes:

AB 1925 authorizes, but does not require, a superior court to establish a veterans court to handle cases involving mentally ill offenders who are veterans if the mental illness stems from military service. Since the bill makes the establishment of veterans courts optional for each of the State's 58 superior courts, enactment of this measure in and of itself imposes no additional costs on the trial court system. The bill directs that a court that opts to establish a veterans court shall have the Presiding Judge (or designee) convene a team of local stakeholders to develop a plan for a veterans court process.

### *Fiscal Impact*

Since: (1) the bill is still permissive in nature and does not compel a court to establish a veterans court; (2) the bill's provisions for setting up the veterans court process are broadly drawn allowing a court latitude in shaping its own veterans court procedures; and (3) if a court opts to establish a veterans court, the AOC estimates that the relative operating cost differential between a traditional court process and the veterans court process is between \$35,000 and \$100,000 annually per veterans court.

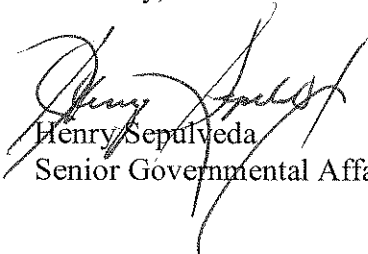
In 2007, the annual operating costs of a Mental Health Court (MHC) were estimated at approximately \$300,000 (including court personnel, overhead, program development, and training, but excluding the cost of ancillary services such as probation, law enforcement, and parole personnel). Start-up costs for a new MHC was approximately \$23,000. In comparison to standard court operating costs (for cases involving offenders with serious mental illness), the added annual cost of operating MHCs is approximately \$108,000 per MHC (this takes into account the collaborative justice court personnel assigned to the MHC).

Some California superior courts have established Drug Courts to manage drug-related cases and offenders as an alternative to the standard superior court processing. In 2005, a study commissioned by the Judicial Council concluded that the Drug Courts resulted in a savings of approximately \$400 per case (compared to the standard case processing).

No study has been undertaken to compare the Drug Court model with the veterans court model contemplated in AB 1925. However, to the extent that a court establishing a veterans court has a similar experience as other courts have had with Drug Courts, some case-processing savings may be realized.

Please contact me at 916-323-3121 or [henry.sepulveda@jud.ca.gov](mailto:henry.sepulveda@jud.ca.gov) if you would like further information or have any questions about the fiscal impact of this legislation on the judicial branch.

Sincerely,



Henry Sepulveda  
Senior Governmental Affairs Analyst

HS/yt

cc: Hon. Mary Salas, Member of the Assembly

Mr. Roy Sianez, Legislative Director, Office of Assembly Member Mary Salas

Mr. Geoff Long, Chief Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee

Mr. Allan Cooper, Fiscal Consultant, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office

Ms. Teresa Calvert, Budget Analyst, Department of Finance



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July 13, 2010

Hon. Christine Kehoe, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5050  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 1925 (Salas), as amended May 28, 2010 – Fiscal Impact Statement

Dear Senator Kehoe:

AB 1925 authorizes, but does not require, a superior court to establish a veterans court to handle cases involving mentally ill offenders who are veterans if the mental illness stems from military service. Since the bill makes the establishment of veterans courts optional for each of the State's 58 superior courts, enactment of this measure in and of itself imposes no additional costs on the trial court system. The bill directs that a court that opts to establish a veterans court shall have the Presiding Judge (or designee) convene a team of local stakeholders to develop a plan for a veterans court process.

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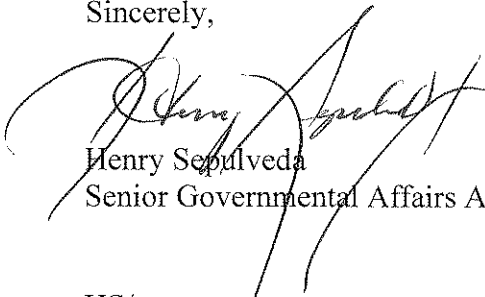
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Sincerely,



Henry Sepulveda  
Senior Governmental Affairs Analyst

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cc: Hon. Mary Salas, Member of the Assembly

Mr. Roy Sianez, Legislative Director, Office of Assembly Member Mary Salas

Ms. Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee

Mr. Matt Osterli, Fiscal Consultant, Senate Republican Fiscal Office

Ms. Teresa Calvert, Budget Analyst, Department of Finance