

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 7, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 201510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee of Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 201510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy:

America's drug courts and veterans treatment courts unite public health and public safety to empower the justice system to respond to addiction and mental illness by offering an evidence-based alternative to incarceration that combines treatment and accountability. These programs have saved billions of tax dollars, transformed the lives of more than 1.5 million citizens and veterans, and are an important resource for law enforcement and other community stakeholders affected by opioid addiction and related crime. As you consider Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations, we ask for your support to ensure that continued funding is appropriated for drug courts and veterans treatment courts at the Department of Justice.

The drug court system – which requires nonviolent offenders with a substance use disorder to remain in treatment and undergo drug testing while under judicial supervision – has been cited as the nation's most fiscally responsible method for addressing drug offenses. In fact, the most comprehensive study on drug courts to date (the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice's National Multi-Site Adult Drug Court Evaluation) concluded that drug courts provide an average cost savings of \$6,000 per participant.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office reported in 2011 that drug courts reduce crime by up to 58 percent. Research has also shown that about 60 percent of drug court participants complete at least 12 months of treatment, as compared with only 10 percent of probationers and parolees.

Veterans treatment courts effectively assist former servicemembers who suffer from serious mental health issues and substance use disorder or dependency issues. These innovative courts provide veterans, whose contact with the criminal justice system results from these issues, a chance to complete treatment and get their lives back on track.

We hope that you support the work of drug courts and veterans treatment courts in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations process. Thank you in advance for consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Chuck Grassley
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

John Cornyn
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
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Mike Crapo
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Brian Schatz
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Tammy Baldwin
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Thomas R. Carper
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Martha McSally
United States Senator

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Jim Risch
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Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
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Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Tina Smith
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Jeffrey A. Merkley
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Jon Tester
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Jack Reed
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United States Senator

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United States Senator

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United States Senator

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United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator