

1 AN ACT concerning military and veterans courts.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Military and Veterans Courts Act.

6 Section 5. Purposes. The General Assembly recognizes that  
7 military members and military veterans may have certain  
8 service-related conditions that may apply in a court of law.  
9 There is a critical need for a military and veterans justice  
10 system that will take into account service-related mental  
11 health problems as well as circumstances surrounding  
12 deployment. It is the intent of the General Assembly to create  
13 a Military and Veterans Court Task Force to investigate and  
14 develop a statutory basis for a specialized military and  
15 veterans court system with the necessary flexibility to meet  
16 unique service-related problems in the State of Illinois. The  
17 General Assembly recognizes that the use and abuse of alcohol  
18 or drugs, mental health conditions, and problematic social  
19 interactions that affect and confront some veterans and members  
20 of the armed services on active duty have a dramatic effect on  
21 the justice system in the State of Illinois. There is a  
22 critical need for a military and veterans justice system  
23 program that will recognize and address the unique problems and

1 circumstances faced by veterans and members of the armed forces  
2 on active duty and the legal issues that are impacted by those  
3 problems and circumstances so as to reduce the incidence of  
4 violence, drug use, drug addiction, alcohol use, alcohol  
5 addiction, mental health conditions, and crimes committed by  
6 some veterans and members of the armed services on active duty.  
7 It is the intent of the General Assembly to create the Military  
8 and Veterans Court Task Force to address these challenges  
9 facing the State of Illinois.

10 Section 10. Task Force established.

11 (a) There is established the Military and Veterans Court  
12 Task Force.

13 (b) The Governor's Office shall provide administrative  
14 support to the Task Force as needed.

15 Section 15. Membership; chair; meetings; quorum.

16 (a) The Military and Veterans Court Task Force shall be  
17 appointed as follows:

18 One member appointed by the Governor;

19 One member appointed by the Attorney General;

20 One member appointed by the President of the Senate;

21 One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
22 Senate;

23 One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
24 Representatives;

1           One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
2 House of Representatives;

3           One member, with experience with the Veterans Court in  
4 Cook County, appointed by the Chief Judge of the Circuit  
5 Court in Cook County;

6           One member, with experience with the Veterans Court in  
7 Madison County, appointed by the Chief Judge of the Third  
8 Judicial Circuit;

9           One member, with experience with the John Marshall Law  
10 School's Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic,  
11 appointed by the Dean of the John Marshall Law School;

12           One member, with experience with the Southern Illinois  
13 University School of Law's Veterans' Legal Assistance  
14 Program, appointed by the Dean of the School of Law of  
15 Southern Illinois University; and

16           One member appointed by the Dean of the College of Law  
17 at the University of Illinois.

18           (b) The member appointed by the Governor shall serve as the  
19 chair of the Task Force.

20           (c) The Task Force members shall receive no salary for  
21 serving, but shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses  
22 incurred as a result of their duties as members of the Task  
23 Force from funds appropriated by the General Assembly for that  
24 purpose, or from funds obtained from sources other than the  
25 General Assembly.

26           (d) A majority of the members of the Task Force shall

1 constitute a quorum.

2 (e) The Task Force shall study and recommend to the General  
3 Assembly a system of military and veterans courts, which shall  
4 supplement and not replace the existing court system. The Task  
5 Force shall make recommendations consistent with the goal that  
6 the military and veterans courts can be established on or after  
7 June 1, 2010. The Task Force shall make its report to the  
8 General Assembly on or before November 1, 2009.

9 (f) The Task Force shall meet at least once every 2 weeks,  
10 and more frequently as necessary, at the call of the chair, and  
11 shall report its findings to the General Assembly as  
12 expeditiously as possible. Task Force meetings shall be held in  
13 a manner to accommodate participation by members in person or  
14 by use of telecommunication technology.

15 (g) Task Force recommendations shall take effect upon the  
16 effective date of a Public Act that enacts them.

17 (h) The Task Force is abolished June 1, 2010.

18 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
19 becoming law.