

May XX, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
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 Cochran and Vice Chairman Leahy:

America's Drug Courts and Veterans Treatment Courts have successfully reduced crime, saved billions of tax dollars, and transformed the lives of more than 1.25 million citizens and veterans. Today, these programs are on the front lines of the opioid epidemic and have become important resources for law enforcement and other community stakeholders affected by opioid addiction and related crime. As you consider Fiscal Year 2018 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, drug-addicted offenders to remain in treatment and undergo random drug testing while under intensive judicial supervision – has been cited as the nation's most fiscally responsible method for dealing with substance-abusing offenders. 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 also shows 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 soldiers who suffer from serious mental health issues and substance abuse 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 2018 appropriations process. Thank you in advance for consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator