

MINUTES

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

DATE: March 19, 2019

The subcommittee meeting was called to order by Representative Brann at 3:55 p.m.

Roll was taken: Present - Representatives Brann, Lightner, Yaroch, Maddock, Pagan, and Hammoud

Absent with Excuse - Representative Brixie

I. Approval of Minutes from Previous Subcommittee Meeting

A motion was moved by Representative Lightner to approve the minutes from the subcommittee meeting held on March 12, 2019. The motion prevailed, a majority of the members voting in the affirmative.

II. Presentation on Problem-Solving Courts and the Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program

Andrew Smith, Problem-Solving Courts Manager, and Thomas Myers, Problem-Solving Courts Analyst, appeared before the subcommittee. Mr. Smith proceeded to discuss the structure and describe each type of problem-solving court. Problem-solving courts are alternatives to jail/prison for individuals with substance abuse disorders and/or mental illnesses. Teams of professionals consisting of judges, treatment professionals, probation, law enforcement, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and evaluators serve to assist eligible individuals with avoiding incarceration and improving education, employment, and recidivism rates.

Drug Courts include adult drug courts, sobriety courts, drug/DWI hybrid courts, family dependency courts, and juvenile drug courts. There are 119 drug treatment court programs and 9 tribal healing to wellness courts. In FY 2018, there were 6,669 active participants: 4,160 in hybrid programs, 1,698 in sobriety programs, 384 in adult drug programs, 248 in juvenile drug programs, and 179 in family dependency programs.

There are 33 mental health court programs in the state. During FY 2018, there were 723 participants in adult district courts, 567 in adult circuit courts, and 124 in juvenile mental health courts. There are 27 veterans treatment courts. During FY 2018, there were 596 active participants.

Mr. Myers proceeded to discuss the Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program (SSSPP). He described the program and the structure of a swift and sure court. SSSPP is a program for high-risk probationers that is focused on behavior modification. The program helps offenders to attain employment and turn their lives around. In FY 2018, there were 25 programs covering 28 counties. There were 1,236 graduates of the program, with almost a 90% reduction in unemployment. Also, graduates were 25% less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission than standard probationers.

Discussion ensued (questions and answers).

III. Announce Next Subcommittee Meeting

The next subcommittee meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 9, 2019. Agenda: Overview of FY 2019-20 Executive Budget Recommendation for SADO and the Judicial Tenure Commission.

IV. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the subcommittee, Representative Brann adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.