

MINUTES

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

DATE: February 22, 2017

The subcommittee meeting was called to order by Representative VerHeulen at 12:00 p.m.
Roll was taken: Present - Representatives VerHeulen, Brann, Miller, and Pagan
Absent - None

I. Presentation on Problem Solving Courts

Jessica Parks, Deputy Director Trial Court Services, appeared before the subcommittee. She provided the subcommittee with copies of a PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Parks gave an educational presentation on the three types of problem solving courts - drug courts, mental health courts, and veteran courts - and on the Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program. Problem solving courts offer judges alternatives to sentencing offenders to prison, and offer participants programs that support rehabilitation and recovery. The primary goals of problem solving courts are to avoid costly incarceration and to reduce the rate at which offenders commit new crimes. At the same time, these courts reduce unemployment and increase educational attainment among participants. Participants in drug and mental health courts are two times less likely to commit another offense after two years and participants in sobriety courts are more than three times less likely to commit another offense after two years. Michigan is a national leader in giving the public access to treatment courts. The state has 179 treatment courts providing access to 97% of the state's population.

Drug courts focus on substance use through treatment, rehabilitation, intensive supervision, frequent judicial status hearings, drug testing, and graduated incentives and sanctions. Drug courts emphasize a holistic and team approach that includes judges, prosecutors, probation officers, law enforcement, defense counsel, and treatment providers.

Mental health courts target offenders who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, or a developmental disability, and the severe nature of the mental illness or functional impairment must necessitate intensive clinical services. Courts provide intense judicial oversight, treatment through local community mental health service providers, drug testing when appropriate, referrals to community services such as housing or clothing resources, enrollment in educational classes and certificate programs, transportation assistance, and assistance with obtaining employment.

Veterans courts offer programming that integrates principles from both drug courts and mental health courts. Courts promote sobriety, recovery, and stability through a coordinated response that involves collaboration with partners in drug courts and mental health courts, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs, volunteer veteran mentors, and organizations that support veterans and their families.

The Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program is an intensive probation supervision program that targets high-risk felony offenders with a history of probation violations or failures. Participants are closely monitored, including being subjected to frequent random testing for drug and alcohol use and being required to attend frequent meetings with probation and/or case management staff. The program aims to improve probationer success by promptly imposing graduated sanctions, including small amounts of jail time, for probation violations.

Discussion ensued (questions and answers).

II. Announce Next Subcommittee Meeting

The next subcommittee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 1, 2017 at 12:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in room 426 of the Capitol Building. Agenda: overview of the Judiciary budget and FY 2017-18 budget request by

Justice Robert P. Young, Jr., Michigan Supreme Court and overview of the Court of Appeals budget and FY 2017-18 budget request by Chief Judge Michael J. Talbot, Michigan Court of Appeals.

III. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the subcommittee, Representative VerHeulen adjourned the subcommittee meeting at 12:59 p.m.