

## **SB 1496 – Veterans Treatment Courts (Similar HB 1085)**

This bill creates s. 26.58, F.S., stating that “a court with jurisdiction in criminal cases may create and administer a veterans treatment court,” and “may adjudicate misdemeanors and felonies,” with a list of definitions for veterans and servicemembers who can participate in this program. It also gives them the exclusive authority to determine if a dishonorably discharged veteran can participate in veterans treatment court. Further specifications are established for the court, with eligibility for those with “a mental health condition, traumatic brain injury, or substance abuse disorder.” Furthermore, “if a veterans treatment court determines that a defendant has completed the requirements of the participant agreement, the court must dispose of the charge that served as the basis of participation in the veterans treatment court in accordance with the participant agreement and any applicable plea agreement, court order, or judgment.” Similar language currently exists under s. 394.47891, F.S.

As of March 2019, Florida has 31 veterans courts in operation. Per DOC, in FY 18-19, there were 142 offenders admitted for veterans’ treatment intervention. It is not known how many more eligible offenders there would be under this new language, so the number of offenders diverted from prison cannot be quantified.

**CONFERENCE ADOPTED ESTIMATE: Negative Indeterminate**

**Requested by: Senate**