

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 2147
OFFERED BY MR. COFFMAN OF COLORADO**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Treatment
3 Court Improvement Act of 2018”.

**4 SEC. 2. HIRING BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
5 OF ADDITIONAL VETERANS JUSTICE OUT-
6 REACH SPECIALISTS.**

7 (a) HIRING OF ADDITIONAL VETERANS JUSTICE
8 OUTREACH SPECIALISTS.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
10 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
11 retary of Veterans Affairs shall hire not fewer than
12 50 Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists and place
13 each such Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist at
14 an eligible Department of Veterans Affairs medical
15 center in accordance with this section.

16 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall en-
17 sure that each Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist
18 employed under paragraph (1)—

1 (A) serves, either exclusively or in addition
2 to other duties, as part of a justice team in a
3 veterans treatment court or other veteran-fo-
4 cused court; and

5 (B) otherwise meets Department hiring
6 guidelines for Veterans Justice Outreach Spe-
7 cialists.

8 (b) ELIGIBLE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
9 MEDICAL CENTERS.—For purposes of this section, an eli-
10 gible Department of Veterans Affairs medical center is
11 any Department of Veterans Affairs medical center that—

12 (1) complies with all Department guidelines and
13 regulations for placement of a Veterans Justice Out-
14 reach Specialist;

15 (2) works within a local criminal justice system
16 with justice-involved veterans;

17 (3) maintains an affiliation with one or more
18 veterans treatment courts or other veteran-focused
19 courts; and

20 (4) either—

21 (A) routinely provides Veterans Justice
22 Outreach Specialists to serve as part of a jus-
23 tice team in a veterans treatment court or other
24 veteran-focused court; or

1 (B) establishes a plan that is approved by
2 the Secretary to provide Veterans Justice Out-
3 reach Specialists employed under subsection
4 (a)(1) to serve as part of a justice team in a
5 veterans treatment court or other veteran-fo-
6 cused court.

7 (c) PLACEMENT PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall
8 prioritize the placement of Veterans Justice Outreach Spe-
9 cialists employed under subsection (a)(1) at eligible De-
10 partment of Veterans Affairs medical centers that have
11 or intend to establish an affiliation, for the purpose of car-
12 rying out the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, with
13 a veterans treatment court, or other veteran-focused court,
14 that—

15 (1) was established on or after the date of the
16 enactment of this Act; or

17 (2)(A) was established before the date of the
18 enactment of this Act; and

19 (B) is not fully staffed with Veterans Justice
20 Outreach Specialists.

21 (d) REPORTS.—

22 (1) REPORT BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AF-
23 FAIRS.—

24 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
25 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the

1 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to
2 Congress a report on the implementation of this
3 section and its effect on the Veterans Justice
4 Outreach Program.

5 (B) CONTENTS.—The report submitted
6 under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

7 (i) The status of the efforts of the
8 Secretary to hire Veterans Justice Out-
9 reach Specialists pursuant to subsection
10 (a)(1), including the total number of Vet-
11 erans Justice Outreach Specialists hired by
12 the Secretary pursuant to such subsection
13 and the number that the Secretary expects
14 to hire pursuant to such subsection.

15 (ii) The total number of Veterans
16 Justice Outreach Specialists assigned to
17 each Department of Veterans Affairs med-
18 ical center that participates in the Vet-
19 erans Justice Outreach Program, including
20 the number of Veterans Justice Outreach
21 Specialists hired under subsection (a)(1)
22 disaggregated by Department of Veterans
23 Affairs medical center.

24 (iii) The total number of eligible De-
25 partment of Veterans Affairs medical cen-

1 ters that sought placement of a Veterans
2 Justice Outreach Specialist under sub-
3 section (a)(1), how many Veterans Justice
4 Outreach Specialists each such center
5 sought, and how many of such medical
6 centers received no placement of a Vet-
7 erans Justice Outreach Specialist under
8 subsection (a)(1).

9 (iv) For each eligible Department of
10 Veterans Affairs medical center—

11 (I) the number of justice-involved
12 veterans who were served or are ex-
13 pected to be served by a Veterans
14 Justice Outreach Specialist hired
15 under subsection (a)(1); and

16 (II) the number of justice-in-
17 volved veterans who do not have ac-
18 cess to a Veterans Justice Outreach
19 Specialist.

20 (2) REPORT BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF
21 THE UNITED STATES.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than three
23 years after the date of the enactment of this
24 Act, the Comptroller General of the United
25 States shall submit to Congress a report on the

1 implementation of this section and the effective-
2 ness of the Veterans Justice Outreach Program.

3 (B) CONTENTS.—The report required by
4 subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

5 (i) An assessment of whether the Sec-
6 retary has fulfilled the Secretary's obliga-
7 tions under this section.

8 (ii) The number of veterans who are
9 served by Veterans Justice Outreach Spe-
10 cialists hired under subsection (a)(1),
11 disaggregated by demographics (including
12 discharge status).

13 (iii) An identification of any sub-
14 groups of veterans who underutilize serv-
15 ices provided under laws administered by
16 the Secretary, including an assessment of
17 whether these veterans have access to Vet-
18 erans Justice Outreach Specialists under
19 the Veterans Justice Outreach Program.

20 (iv) Such recommendations as the
21 Comptroller General may have for the Sec-
22 retary to improve the effectiveness of the
23 Veterans Justice Outreach Program.

24 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) **JUSTICE TEAM.**—The term “justice team”
2 means the group of individuals, which may include
3 a judge, court coordinator, prosecutor, public de-
4 fender, treatment provider, probation or other law
5 enforcement officer, program mentor, and Veterans
6 Justice Outreach Specialist, who assist justice-in-
7 volved veterans in a veterans treatment court or
8 other veteran-focused court.

9 (2) **JUSTICE-INVOLVED VETERAN.**—The term
10 “justice-involved veteran” means a veteran with ac-
11 tive, ongoing, or recent contact with some compo-
12 nent of a local criminal justice system.

13 (3) **LOCAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.**—The
14 term “local criminal justice system” means law en-
15 forcement, jails, prisons, and Federal, State, and
16 local courts.

17 (4) **VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH PRO-**
18 **GRAM.**—The term “Veterans Justice Outreach Pro-
19 gram” means the program through which the De-
20 partment of Veterans Affairs identifies justice-in-
21 volved veterans and provides such veterans with ac-
22 cess to Department services.

23 (5) **VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH SPE-**
24 **CIALIST.**—The term “Veterans Justice Outreach
25 Specialist” means an employee of the Department of

1 Veterans Affairs who serves as a liaison between the
2 Department and the local criminal justice system on
3 behalf of a justice-involved veteran.

4 (6) VETERANS TREATMENT COURT.—The term
5 “veterans treatment court” means a State or local
6 court that is participating in the veterans treatment
7 court program (as defined in section 2991(i)(1) of
8 the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of
9 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797aa(i)(1))).

