



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2016-0198, **Version:** 2

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Clerk 04/14/2016

A MOTION requesting the executive to develop and submit for council review and acceptance a report on the status and options for sustainable continuation of the department of adult and juvenile detention dedicated veteran housing pilot and veterans-focused programming at the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center and to request a supplemental appropriation to support such pilot and programming.

WHEREAS, King County is home to an estimated one hundred fourteen thousand former members of the United States military, reserves and National Guard who have served in active duty. This population of veterans represents between five and six percent of the total county population, and

WHEREAS, research has shown significantly higher rates of posttraumatic stress disorder in veterans who have served in combat zones than in the general population. The national research suggests that thousands of King County veterans have experienced or are experiencing posttraumatic stress symptoms to some degree, and

WHEREAS, veterans coming into contact with the criminal justice system often have a number of unmet service needs across multiple domains, including mental health issues, substance abuse, homelessness, poverty, unemployment and issues related to posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries, and

WHEREAS, by increasing veteran access to veterans' justice programs in incarceration facilities, unmet service needs and barriers to recovery can more effectively be addressed through connecting veterans to resources that help stabilize and support them and that aid these individuals in returning to their communities,

and

WHEREAS, because incarcerated veterans face unique challenges, and research on the medical and psychiatric needs of veterans and persons with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injuries is continually and rapidly evolving, staff serving veteran populations have significant ongoing training needs, and

WHEREAS, some inmates eligible for specialized veteran services may not receive them because of a lack of self-identification during the intake process, and

WHEREAS, in May 2014, in recognition of the unique needs of incarcerated veterans, the council passed Motion 14125, requiring the executive to develop and submit for council review and approval a report on improving programs and services for incarcerated veterans in department of adult and juvenile detention facilities, and

WHEREAS, in January 2015, the council passed Motion 14301, accepting the Improving Programs and Services for Incarcerated Veterans Report required under Motion 14125, and

WHEREAS, among the recommendations made in the Improving Programs and Services for Incarcerated Veterans Report, transmitted as Attachment A to Motion 14301, the motion workgroup recommended that the department of adult and juvenile detention pilot a dedicated veteran housing unit and provide veterans-focused programming at the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center, and

WHEREAS, among the recommendations made in the Improving Programs and Services for Incarcerated Veterans Report, transmitted as Attachment A to Motion 14301, the motion workgroup made recommendations aimed at improving identification of justice-involved and veterans at all King County jail facilities, and

WHEREAS, the Improving Programs and Services for Incarcerated Veterans Report also recommended ongoing training opportunities for jail and jail health staff on working with veteran-specific populations and understanding military culture and military trauma-informed care, and

WHEREAS, since new phrasing of the veteran status question in inmate assessments at all King County

jail facilities was adopted in June 2015, the rate of inmates self-identifying as veterans has increased from three percent to over eighteen percent, and

WHEREAS , the department of adult and juvenile detention began its dedicated veteran housing unit pilot at the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center in June 2015, with a unit each for male and female veterans, and the housing pilot has had fifty-one veterans participate in the unit for male veterans between June 2015 and February 2016, and

WHEREAS, the veterans-focused programming recommended in the Improving Programs and Services for Incarcerated Veterans Report has been serving incarcerated veterans at the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center since June 2015; and

WHEREAS, nearly all veteran-specific programming provided to inmates in the veterans program at the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center is provided by volunteers, while the services requested by veteran participants are increasingly diverse;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The executive is requested to develop and transmit to the council:

1. A report on the status of the dedicated veteran housing pilot and veterans-focused programming at the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center as undertaken pursuant to the work and implementation plan included in the report attached to Motion 14301. The report should summarize work to-date and preliminary recidivism data, and provide options and recommendations for sustainable continuation of the pilot and programming; and

2. An appropriation ordinance appropriating at least \$75,000 for the veterans housing pilot and veterans-focused programming at the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center if such an appropriation is not included in the executive's second-quarter omnibus appropriations ordinance, or for whatever greater amount the executive deems appropriate after conducting the necessary analysis to formulate the report requested by this motion, to support the program for the remainder of 2016.

B. The executive shall develop the report in collaboration with the department of adult and juvenile detention, the department of community and human services and the department of public health.

C. The report shall include the following:

1. A summary of the status of the work described in the work and implementation plan outlined in the report accepted by Motion 14301;

2. A summary of the number of unduplicated program participants to-date, including the number of veterans served in the dedicated veterans housing unit, through veteran-specific programming outside of the dedicated veterans housing unit, or both;

3. Any data or information available on recidivism of program participants or successful referrals to other services after program participants' release;

4. Aggregate, nonidentifying demographic information about the veterans incarcerated during the period of time being reported and about the program participants, if available;

5. Suggestions for improving coordination and program delivery, including suggestions for increasing participation by female veterans; and

6. Options and recommendations for sustainable continuation of the program, particularly in light of lessons learned and additional or emergent needs identified by the executive including consideration of funding for program staffing, training or other needs for the remainder of 2016.

D. The executive should transmit:

1. The report and a motion accepting the report by August 31, 2016, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the chief of staff, the policy staff director and the lead staff for the law and justice committee, or its successor; and

2. The appropriation ordinance by August 31, 2016, if such an appropriation is not included in the

executive's second-quarter omnibus appropriations ordinance.