

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to military veterans and  
 3           servicemembers court programs; amending s. 394.47891,  
 4           F.S.; requiring the chief judge of each judicial  
 5           circuit to establish a military veterans and  
 6           servicemembers court program; requiring the chief  
 7           judge to consider nationally recognized best practices  
 8           when adopting policies and procedures for the program;  
 9           providing an effective date.

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 11   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 13           Section 1.   Section 394.47891, Florida Statutes, is amended  
 14   to read:

15           394.47891   Military veterans and servicemembers court  
 16   programs.—

17           (1)   The chief judge of each judicial circuit shall ~~may~~  
 18   establish a Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program  
 19   under which veterans, as defined in s. 1.01; veterans who were  
 20   discharged or released under any condition; servicemembers, as  
 21   defined in s. 250.01; individuals who are current or former  
 22   United States Department of Defense contractors; and individuals  
 23   who are current or former military members of a foreign allied  
 24   country, who are charged or convicted of a criminal offense, and  
 25   who suffer from a military-related mental illness, traumatic

26 | brain injury, substance abuse disorder, or psychological problem  
27 | can be sentenced in accordance with chapter 921 in a manner that  
28 | appropriately addresses the severity of the mental illness,  
29 | traumatic brain injury, substance abuse disorder, or  
30 | psychological problem through services tailored to the  
31 | individual needs of the participant. Entry into any Military  
32 | Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program must be based upon the  
33 | sentencing court's assessment of the defendant's criminal  
34 | history, military service, substance abuse treatment needs,  
35 | mental health treatment needs, amenability to the services of  
36 | the program, the recommendation of the state attorney and the  
37 | victim, if any, and the defendant's agreement to enter the  
38 | program.

39 |       (2) The chief judge shall consider nationally recognized  
40 | best practices in adopting policies and procedures for the  
41 | program.

42 |       Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.