



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**VETERANS' AFFAIRS**  
*Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.*

**H.R. 2147: The Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act**

**Background:**

VA's Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) program works to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among veterans. VA employs "VJO Specialists" to provide direct outreach, assessment and case management for justice-involved veterans and serve as the link between veterans, VA, and the local justice system.

In areas where a Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) exists, VJO Specialists also work with the VTC to inform officers of the court about whether a veteran is complying with VA treatment programs and relevant court orders. VTCs exist to assist veterans with mental health or substance abuse issues in accessing treatment to keep them out of the traditional justice system. VTCs often partner with local VA medical centers and Veterans Service Organizations. VTCs are voluntary and only veterans who have been charged with non-violent crimes and are in need of mental health or substance abuse treatment may go to a VTC.

H.R. 2147 would require VA to hire and place at least 50 Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists and ensure that each one serves as part of a justice team in a veterans treatment court or other veteran-focused court.

**The Message:**

- VA employs Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Specialists to serve as a link between certain veterans, VA, and the local justice system.
- VJO Specialists often work with Veterans Treatment Courts to assist veterans with mental health or substance use issues in accessing treatment and avoiding incarceration.
- This bill would require VA to hire 50 new VJO Specialists to serve as part of a justice team in Veterans Treatment Courts.