

[D R A F T L E T T E R – F o r C o u n c i l R e v i e w o n 0 5 / 0 6 / 2 0 1 3]

May ____, 2013

San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors
County Government Center, Room D-430
San Luis Obispo, California 93408

SUBJECT: L E T T E R O F S U P P O R T - S A N L U I S O B I S P O V E T E R A N S C O U R T E F F O R T

Dear Board of Supervisors:

The effort to implement a Veterans Court in the County of San Luis Obispo has the City of Grover Beach's fullest support. The City of Grover Beach appreciates the establishment of this additional support network on behalf of all veterans in Grover Beach and the State of California. As the Board is no doubt aware, the veteran population in the County of San Luis Obispo and the State of California face unique challenges that the Veterans Court program is designed to mitigate and address.

The Judicial Branch of the California Courts system describes its nine established Veterans Treatment Courts as a concerted effort to address the "growing trend of veterans appearing before the courts to face charges stemming from substance abuse or mental illness," because "research has shown that traditional services do not always adequately meet the needs of veterans. Many veterans are entitled to treatment through the Veterans Administration and Veterans Treatment Courts help connect them with these benefits." The nine counties with Veterans Treatment Courts demonstrate their support by partnering with the County agencies that are serving veterans within their respective regions to ensure that veterans with these challenges are given the appropriate referrals and help they need, regardless of when they served in the military.

Establishing a court system in San Luis Obispo County that provides alternative resources and outcomes to veterans is also a benefit to the County itself. Eliminating lengthy and costly trials, reducing long-term incarcerations, reducing crime and victimization, shifting emphasis from local to federal resources, and providing early intervention by getting veterans "on their feet" before they slip more firmly into the crime subculture are all tangible reasons these courts benefit the counties that established them.

We know you share our passion for the successful reintegration of veterans into our communities, and we sincerely hope that the County of San Luis Obispo joins other supportive California counties by establishing a Veterans Treatment Court.

Respectfully,

DEBBIE PETERSON
Mayor

Agenda Item No. 4
City Council Mtg. 05/06/13