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S.B. 179
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Johnson

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SUMMARY

- Requires certain correctional, judicial, and veterans' service entities to ascertain the veteran status of individuals imprisoned or charged with a criminal offense punishable by incarceration.
- Specifies that a sheriff's jail register must include a prisoner's veteran status.
- Specifies that outreach and coordination programs established by a county veterans service commission may include providing financial assistance to veterans treatment courts.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Veteran status verification

The bill establishes a mandatory program by which the following entities must investigate and verify the veteran status of inmates or individuals charged with a criminal offense punishable by incarceration:

- Each institution under the control of the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction;
- Each county, municipal, municipal-county, and multicounty correctional institution that has a jail, workhouse, minimum security jail, community-based correctional facility, or facility in which an individual must serve a term of imprisonment or prison term under continuing law;
- Each court of common pleas, municipal and county court, department of probation, and pre-trial diversion program; and

- Each county veterans service commission.¹

The bill requires the institutions and entities listed above to determine the number of individuals necessary to implement the program and designate and train individuals to implement the program. Institutions and entities must use the Veteran's Reentry Search Service (VRSS), operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to investigate an individual's veteran status. The bill stipulates that institutions and entities must seek cost-free assistance from the VA in training individuals to use VRSS. The institution and entities can seek training assistance outside the VA, at the institution's or entity's expense, if cost-free assistance is unavailable. Institutions and entities, excluding judicial entities, are required to adopt rules implementing the program.²

Veteran assistance and records

For each individual verified as a veteran under the program, the institution or entity must assist the individual in contacting veteran-related services and must record the individual's veteran status on all appropriate records. The bill specifies that a sheriff's jail register must include an inmate's veteran status if that status is verified under the program.³

Veteran's outreach programs

Under continuing law, a county veterans service commission can establish outreach and coordination programs with other agencies to enhance veterans' services within a county. The bill specifies that the programs can include providing financial assistance to a veteran's treatment court to establish and fulfill an outreach program, and the hiring and compensation of a person who will work at a veterans' treatment court to assist the court with an outreach program.⁴

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	04-23-25

ANSB0179IN-136/ts

¹ R.C. 341.43(A).

² R.C. 341.43(B)(1) through (4) and (C).

³ R.C. 341.02 and 341.43(B)(5) and (6).

⁴ R.C. 5901.03(E).