



MESSAGE FROM MARSHA FAIR TREATMENT FOR OUR VETERANS

In 1942, when the Department of Defense selected Colorado Springs as the home for Fort Carson it was clear that Fountain, Widefield, Colorado Springs and the surrounding communities would have a major role in our nation's security and future. To embrace this awesome responsibility requires us to constantly pursue programs that support our troops and their families when they are stationed in our region.

One role our communities can take is to lead the charge in supporting the establishment of a Veterans Treatment Court(VTC) for our service members returning home after years of combat. Some of our returning warriors have been injured, suffer from mental health problems and have resorted to drugs and alcohol to cope with the hardships of war. The VTC process will provide them the opportunity to access services for treating substance abuse, mental health issues, health care problems, vocational training and family support.

The existing El Paso County Veterans Treatment Court is under the impressive leadership of Judge Crowder, Assistant District Attorney Jeff Lindsey and includes support and counseling services from many individuals offering combat veterans assistance with mental-health counselors, court administrators and veteran's advocates. The existing Veterans Court is a pilot project and could use a healthy dose of funding and state support to address the backlog of needs for our Fort Carson soldiers dealing with combat-related brain injuries and stress disorders. To assist the courts with essential funding opportunities I will be sponsoring the Colorado Veterans Treatment Court(VTC) bill in the upcoming 2010 General Session. The VTC bill authorizes each judicial district to establish a program for the treatment of veterans or members of the military separate from all other types of court cases.

I am sponsoring the Colorado bill in parallel with U.S. Senate Bill S.902 sponsored by Senator Kerry. The congressional bill will provide the long term funding for the veterans court and the Colorado bill will establish the court in state law for developing, implementing and enhancing courts to serve our injured veterans. Services covered by the funding shall include treatment for substance abuse, mental health (depression and post-traumatic stress disorder); diversion and probation; offender management and after care services such as relapse prevention, health care, education, vocational training, job placement, housing placement and child care and other family support services for each participant who requires services.

This VTC bill is one of the most important bills for our military members and their families in the upcoming session. If you or someone you know is interested in helping us make this bill a reality please contact me immediately and I will provide a list of U.S. Senate members, U.S. House members, State and local policy makers to contact. It is an honor to answer the call of duty and our responsibility fight for the men and women of Fort Carson as they have so gallantly fought for us! These wounded and hurting service members of our communities deserve no less than our full support for this important policy change that is currently being debated in Washington D.C., and Colorado. It my honor to serve the citizens of HD19 and troops of Fort Carson!

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