

Establishment of a national center follows a recommendation by the nonpartisan Council on Criminal Justice Veterans Justice Commission

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Contact: Brian Edsall

bedsall@counciloncj.org

845-521-9810

WASHINGTON — In bipartisan action, Congress has authorized \$4 million for a new national center dedicated to improving outcomes for military veterans who become involved in the criminal justice system. The funds are included in the budget for the Department of Justice, signed Friday by President Trump.

The new center was included in a [set of recommendations](#) from the nonpartisan Council on Criminal Justice [Veterans Justice Commission](#), which found that the justice system fails to consistently identify veterans and steer them away from incarceration.

“The lack of coordination between programs for justice-involved veterans results in the duplication of efforts, a lack of proper program evaluation, and an inability to disseminate best practices,” the Commission said in its 2023 report. “As a result, justice-involved veterans seeking assistance often confront a confusing and disjointed network of untested interventions.”

The national center marks a major milestone for efforts intended to address these shortcomings. The Commission said the center should be responsible for:

- Enhancing the coordination of information, data, and best practices between and among programs serving justice-involved veterans
- Identifying research gaps in veterans’ programs, and
- Funding original research and technical assistance to fill those gaps and encouraging programmatic innovation to expand evidence-based practice for justice-involved veteran interventions.

“Service-related trauma and other legacies of deployment push too many veterans on a path toward our criminal justice system, and our nation has a responsibility to better understand

and interrupt that trajectory,” said Brigadier General David “Mac” MacEwen, the commission’s director. “This center honors veterans’ sacrifices and will help us address their unique risk factors by serving as a hub for best practices, research, and coordination of federal, state, and local programs.”

The CCJ Veterans Justice Commission was comprised of 15 of the nation’s top military, veterans, and criminal justice leaders. It examined the risk factors that contribute to veterans’ involvement in the justice system, the adequacy of transitional support for service members reentering civilian life, and the effectiveness of justice system responses when veterans break the law. The commission produced a wide range of [research](#) and issued [11 recommendations](#).

The legislation is [H.R. 6938](#) (Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026). The national center item appears in section 14 (D) of the budget for the Office of Justice Programs, the Justice Department’s grantmaking agency.

About the Council on Criminal Justice

The Council on Criminal Justice is a nonpartisan think tank and invitational membership organization that advances understanding of the criminal justice policy choices facing the nation and builds consensus for solutions that enhance safety and justice for all.