

To: AVVA Board of Directors

From: John Birch Region VIII Director

Re: Veterans in the Justice System

This committee I have been involved with for several years and it was one of the first committees I was involved with. I bring experience to this committee because I spent 25 years in the system as a Correctional Officer. There is a common theme for Veterans incarcerated and in part their incarceration had ties to their military service.

Before I retired I had a chance to talk to the Iraqi Veteran-Afghanistan Veteran. I found a common thread to injuries suffered while serving. Medication supplied for injuries was usually an opiate based cocktail. When it was figured out that addicts were being created the response was cut the injured Veteran off. The cycle was they were addicted, and they became seekers. They committed crimes were caught convicted to prison. They lost almost everything.

Many of them if they had Veteran peer courts there could have been a chance to turn that future of incarceration around. This committee uses education and promote Veteran peer courts. I am currently a volunteer at the Oregon State Penitentiary. If we can keep them out of prison look at the potential savings that occur.