

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

**SENATE BILL****No. 976** Session of  
2019

INTRODUCED BY REGAN, MASTRIANO, ARGALL, BAKER, BARTOLOTTA,  
BREWSTER, BROWNE, COSTA, DINNIMAN, KILLION, MARTIN, MENSCH,  
PHILLIPS-HILL, STEFANO, J. WARD, K. WARD, YUDICHAK AND  
AUMENT, DECEMBER 12, 2019

SENATOR BAKER, JUDICIARY, AS AMENDED, JANUARY 29, 2020

## AN ACT

1 Amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the  
2 Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in organization and  
3 jurisdiction of courts of common pleas, further providing for  
4 problem-solving courts.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Section 916(a) of Title 42 of the Pennsylvania  
8 Consolidated Statutes is amended and the section is amended by  
9 adding subsections to read:

10 § 916. Problem-solving courts.

11 (a) Establishment.--The court of common pleas of a judicial  
12 district and the Municipal Court of Philadelphia may establish,  
13 from available funds, one or more problem-solving courts which  
14 have specialized jurisdiction, including, but not limited to,  
15 veterans courts, drug courts, mental health courts and driving  
16 under the influence courts, whereby defendants are admitted to a  
17 court-supervised individualized treatment program. The court may  
18 adopt local rules for the administration of problem-solving

1 courts and their related treatment services. The local rules may  
2 not be inconsistent with this section or any rules established  
3 by the Supreme Court.

4 \* \* \*

5 (d) Veterans courts.--

6 (1) If a court of common pleas OF A JUDICIAL DISTRICT or <--  
7 the Municipal Court of Philadelphia has established a  
8 veterans court under subsection (a), the court may provide  
9 for participation by defendants from ~~adjacent counties~~ <--  
10 ANOTHER COUNTY OR COUNTIES. <--

11 (2) A court of common pleas OF A JUDICIAL DISTRICT or <--  
12 the Municipal Court of Philadelphia may join with ~~courts in~~ <--  
13 ~~adjacent counties~~ THE COURT IN ANOTHER COUNTY OR COUNTIES to <--  
14 establish a multicounty veterans court.

15 (e) Veterans track.--If a court of common pleas OF A <--  
16 JUDICIAL DISTRICT or the Municipal Court of Philadelphia  
17 established a problem-solving court under subsection (a), except  
18 for a veterans court, the court may establish a veterans track  
19 within the problem-solving court. As used in this subsection,  
20 the term "veterans track" means a program that utilizes some  
21 components of a veterans court, including, but not limited to,  
22 treatment resources and veteran mentors and does not have the  
23 population and judicial resources to sustain ~~of~~ a full veterans <--  
24 court.

25 (f) Local rules.--A court of common pleas OF A JUDICIAL <--  
26 DISTRICT or the Municipal Court of Philadelphia that established  
27 a veterans court, multicounty veterans court or veterans track  
28 under this section may adopt local rules for the administration  
29 of the courts and their related treatment services. The local  
30 rules may not be inconsistent with this section or any rules

1 established by the Supreme Court.

2 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.