



News Release

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Contact: Chris Saunders

619-961-4311

Thomas Jefferson School of Law Students Represent Vets at Stand Down 2011

SAN DIEGO -- Law students from Thomas Jefferson School of Law's Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic (VLAC) will be representing veterans in court at Stand Down 2011 this **Friday, July 15**, at San Diego High School, 1405 Park Boulevard.

San Diego Superior Court's Family Support Division will be holding a session at Stand Down to hear more than 50 child support cases and TJSL's Veterans Clinic is coordinating the legal representation for all of the veterans who will be appearing before the court commissioner. The TJSL law students will argue about 40 of the cases.

The VLAC is operated by the law school at Veterans Village of San Diego (VVSD), which organizes Stand Down each year as an opportunity for homeless veterans to get a wide range of necessities and services at the weekend-long event.

"This event is a huge part of our collaboration with VVSD and the San Diego Department of Child Support Services, which has been recognized by the ABA and the VA as a national model program in addressing child support issues among homeless veterans," said VLAC director Steve Berenson, who is a professor of law at Thomas Jefferson.

Among the TJSL students representing clients will be 2L Matt Ferrara, a Marine Corps Veteran who has a passion for working with fellow veterans. "Working at the VLAC is a rewarding experience," Ferrara says. "It makes me feel good to give back."

"Among the major obstacles facing many homeless veterans are past due and ongoing child support obligations," said Professor Berenson. "Some veterans may accumulate tens and even hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid child support during periods of homelessness and unemployment. Harsh collection remedies such as wage garnishments and license suspensions may prevent even those homeless veterans who obtain employment from having the resources to maintain stable housing.

The goal is to render these child support obligations manageable, so that the veteran has a chance to reintegrate into productive society, while at the same time protecting the interests of their children and custodial parents."

The court goes into session at **8:30 a.m.** on the handball courts at San Diego High, and the law students will begin meeting with the veterans at **8 a.m.** Hearings will continue throughout the day.

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Note to Editors and Reporters: Media coverage is welcome; however, it will be up to each individual veteran whether they will allow themselves to be photographed.