

**ANN ARBOR AMERICAN LEGION POST 46 ANNOUNCEMENT – SEPTEMBER 18, 2015**

**LEGAL AID CLINIC FOR WASHTENAW COUNTY VETERANS IS NOW 'OPEN FOR BUSINESS'.**

After some 15 years of letter writing, personal visits, arm twisting, entreaties and other forms of supplication, the University of Michigan Law School has created a Legal Aid Clinic for veterans. Professor Joshua Kay, a Clinical Assistant Professor of Law, will serve as the first Director of the Clinic. The MILVETS law student group at the Law School will be providing the research and staff support for this valuable new resource which is now available to our returning veterans. For all Washtenaw County veterans in need of legal representation and advice, the number to call is 734-763-2798. Because these are early days in the operation of the clinic, there are presently no formal application forms or listing of required documentation to be filed with the clinic but such requirements will assuredly be published in the future.

We have been able to learn about some of the initial decisions made by the clinic as follows:

1. There are presently no designated financial criteria which must be met in order to qualify a veteran for representation by the clinic.
2. At present, all eligible veterans must live in Washtenaw County.
3. Any veteran who needs representation in a civil case (landlord tenant, collection, family matters, tort, driver's license reinstatement, etc.) should contact the clinic to determine if his or her case is one that the clinic will accept. Otherwise, the clinic has assembled a list of local lawyers willing to take on matters for veterans on a pro bono or low cost basis.
4. At present, the clinic will not accept criminal cases; however, it is willing to consider cases that involve collateral consequences of criminal charges. If in doubt, all veterans should contact 734-763-2798 to get further information and advice. Further, of course, referral to the Veterans Court would be another alternative where mentoring and other support groups are available to the veteran.

If this announcement is somewhat premature because all of the details have not yet been fully determined and I sound excited, I apologize but this project has been a high priority objective for many years and now it has become reality it is almost impossible to believe. From a personal standpoint, I believe that this is the most significant local event in the recognition of the contributions made by our veterans since the establishment of the SVA here on the U of M campus some 7 years ago. All Washtenaw County Veterans should record the clinic telephone number, 734-763-2798, in their cell phones, datebooks, or wherever it will be readily available. Further, I would appreciate your feedback regarding your contacts with the clinic and your opinion of its helpfulness insofar as it does not invade your personal privacy. Otherwise, best wishes to all veterans in need of legal advice and assistance.

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