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Summary Judgments: Our daily legal-news aggregator for July 19

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By Joseph Schuman

Legal help for vets: It is an all-too-common scenario: a soldier returns home so damaged by war that he self-destructs in criminal violence. In recent years, judges, prosecutors and veterans have created a court system aimed at handling and helping vets who violate the law, whether in a fight, a drunken driving episode or an attack on police, the *New York Times* reports. While some officials feel war trauma shouldn't merit special treatment, a notion is spreading through the legal and law-enforcement worlds that traditional punishment isn't the best response to crimes spurred by the stresses of war. More than 80 local jurisdictions have adopted court processes that offer veterans special treatment and close supervision.

Suspecting ethics: Who's watching the congressional watchers? Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, an independent watchdog group, is calling on the top Republican and Democrat in the House to appoint outside counsel to investigate the House Ethics Committee, the *Hill* reports. Among other infractions, Committee lawyers breached confidentiality rules by prematurely revealing information about a probe of Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters, the watch dog group alleges. The Ethics Committee has also allowed a backlog of open cases to crop up, Citizens for Responsibility charges. "More important than an inquiry into any specific member of Congress is an investigation into the committee itself," CREW Executive Director Melanie Sloan said. "Confidence in the House ethics process already is historically low."

Eizenstat's new client: In government, Stuart Eizenstat dealt with the after-effects of war crimes. Now, as a partner leading the international practice of Covington & Burling, he is defending a war-crimes suspect, *Legal Times* reports. Eizenstat led the Clinton administration's investigation of Holocaust-era looting and handled similar duties for the Obama administration. According to paperwork filed with Congress, Eizenstat now plans to lobby U.S. officials for Lima Holding and its chief executive, Doron Livnat. Lima is under investigation in the Netherlands for suspected war crimes because it leased machinery allegedly used by the Israeli government to build a separation barrier in the West Bank. Eizenstat calls the accusation "startling" and far-fetched.

California cities v. the governor: Under the California budget enacted last month, neighborhood redevelopment agencies will be dissolved unless the cities and towns they serve fork over \$1.7 billion in local tax revenue. To protect the agencies, mayors went to court Monday, the *Los Angeles Times* reports. The League of California Cities and the California Redevelopment Association filed a suit against Gov. Jerry Brown and the Legislature, accusing them of violating a ballot measure approved last year that bars the state from raiding local tax money. Until the merits of their challenge are decided, the plaintiffs also want the California Supreme Court to prevent the budget legislation from taking effect.

The worth of a judge: It is the accepted wisdom of New York judicial circles that state judges are underpaid. But there's little agreement on how their raises should be calculated, the *New York Times* reports. The Judicial Compensation Commission, created last year by a Legislature that repeatedly failed to handle the issue on its own, began a summer-long process last week aimed at coming up with a formula. And it has been inundated with different versions of salary math. Commissioners will hold what will likely be their only public hearing on the question this Wednesday in Albany.

Juvenile injustice: In Israel, civilian courts aren't allowed to jail children younger than 14 years, the *BBC* reports. But in the West Bank, where suspects are usually tried in military courts, the government is jailing Palestinian children as young as 12, the Israeli human rights group Btselem says. The children, most arrested for throwing stones at Israeli soldiers, are jailed up to two months. The Israeli military called Btselem's report "unbalanced" and said the children in question are being exploited by terror groups.

Arrested developments: Being under arrest in the U.K. and the United States aren't the same thing. The London arrest on Sunday of News Corp. executive Rebekah Brooks in the spiraling wiretapping investigation doesn't mean authorities were preparing to charge her, the *Wall Street Journal* reports. Arrest can be an early step in British criminal investigations, a means of evidence gathering, and Brooks was released without being charged late Sunday night. She is now formally a suspect in the investigation, while before the arrest she was formally a witness. But she is unlikely to be charged anytime soon.

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