

The TRUST

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

March 1, 2014

Senator John Coghill
State Capitol Room 119
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: SB 64 – OMNIBUS CRIME/CORRECTIONS BILL

Dear Senator Coghill,


The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (The Trust) appreciates your leadership in identifying evidenced based smart justice strategies to protect public safety and help Alaskans successfully re-integrate back into our communities. Trust beneficiaries are overrepresented in all parts of the criminal justice system – in their contact with law enforcement, in the courts, in our jails, and in parole and probation caseloads. The problem affects both rural and urban communities of our state.

The Alaska Department of Corrections opened the Goose Creek Correctional Center at a cost of \$250 million to Alaskans with an annual operating budget of \$50 million. If the state's correctional population continues to grow, the state's prisons will be full by 2016. At a time when our state budget faces declining revenue, making the best use of criminal justice dollars is critical to the justice reinvestment process and to improving the overall safety and wellness of our state. The Trust supports SB64; in particular,

- the sections increasing the felony threshold for property related crimes,
- the sections instituting the 24/7 sobriety program,
- the sections instituting the P.A.C.E. program,
- the section requiring the Department of Corrections to conduct a risk-needs assessment on all offenders who have been sentenced to 30 days or more,
- the section establishing a fund for treatment programs that contribute to reducing recidivism, and
- the section allowing credit for time served in residential substance abuse treatment programs.

We appreciate your advocacy on behalf of Alaskans in particular those who are Trust beneficiaries.

Sincerely,



Jeff Jessee, CEO