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Drug crime bill moves out of first House committee

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JUNEAU, Alaska — A Senate bill that changes how Alaska punishes drug possession crimes are punished has moved out of its first committee of referral in the House.

SB56, by Sen. Fred Dyson, was advanced from the House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday.

The bill would make the possession of a small amount of certain controlled substances a misdemeanor if a person has not been convicted of more than two drug-related offenses within a seven year time period.

The committee adopted an amendment that would exclude GHB, a date rape drug, from the proposed sentencing regime.

Possession of GHB would remain a felony offense if the bill becomes law.

SB56 is in line with the smart justice movement, which stresses that the length and nature of a punishment fit the severity of a crime.

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