

# LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY  
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450  
FAX (907) 465-2029  
Mail Stop 3101

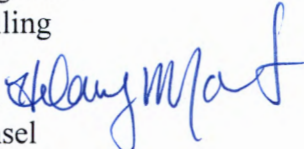
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

## MEMORANDUM

October 24, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Breath test (CSSB 54(FIN); Work Order No. 30-LS0461\N.32)

**TO:** Senator John Coghill  
Attn: Jordan Shilling

**FROM:** Hilary V. Martin   
Legislative Counsel

You have asked whether there are any legal problems with amendment 30-LS0461\N.32.<sup>1</sup>

Amendment N.32 requires the commissioner of corrections to conduct a chemical test of the prisoner's breath at the time of the prisoner's release and release the prisoner only if the test result indicates that the prisoner's breath has less than 0.08 grams of alcohol for each 210 liters of breath.

Holding a prisoner beyond when the prisoner should be released likely violates the prisoner's due process rights. If the prisoner is eligible for release, the commissioner does not have any authority to hold the prisoner for a longer period. As a custodian of that prisoner the Department of Corrections probably has a duty of care for a person that is unable to safely care for themselves at the time of release. Involuntary commitment may be one option available to the department. In addition, it is not clear in the amendment what the commissioner should do with the prisoner if the prisoner has a breath test higher than 0.08 grams of alcohol for each 210 liters of breath.<sup>2</sup>

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

HVM:dls  
17-524.dls

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<sup>1</sup> A copy of amendment N.32 was provided to our office by Mr. Shilling.

<sup>2</sup> The amendment would prohibit release even if a responsible third party is available to take a prisoner home.