

HB 187

AN ACT RELATING TO CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS

3/6/2020

HB 187

- Would allow for the transfer of prisoners out of state only for limited circumstances, such as medical treatment, extradition, or placement closer to family.
- Would prevent prison privatization in State of Alaska.
- Both measures in HB 187 seek to continue work begun by Legislature in HB 49 in 2019, and in SB 64 in 2004.
- Rehabilitation and reentry will be severely impaired if prisoners are sent out of state and/or to private prisons.

CSHB 187: Changes in H State Affairs

- ▶ One amendment, E.6, offered:
 - ▶ Language added at suggestion of the Department of Corrections to protect vulnerable populations, such as former police officers.
 - ▶ Clarifying language removed possibilities prisoners could be sent to private facilities out of state, conforming with departmental practice.
 - ▶ At the request of Rep Sharon Jackson, added language for inmates unlikely to return to Alaska.

Private Prisons in Alaska

In 2004, the Alaska Legislature passed SB65, which effectively ended the practice of sending prisoners out of state to private prisons, and created the current system of correctional facilities. It would take over 20 years to bring all out of state prisoners home and/or place them in Alaskan facilities.

Governor Frank Murkowski stated: “Over a decade of gridlock has led to the failure to improve of what was supposed to be a temporary solution of sending prisoners to Arizona...finally, this bill will generate good paying, long term jobs for Alaskans and end the export of over \$14 million per year to Arizona.”

Private Prisons in Alaska

- As Governor Murkowski noted, Alaskan public dollars should stay in Alaska.
- Despite SB 65, private prisons lobbied for earmarks and public dollars through 2007 and were implicated in the VECO scandal.
- By 2007, four cities have voted against establishing such prisons within their limits: Anchorage (2019 and 1997) Delta Junction (1999), Kenai (2001), and Whittier (2005).
- Legislature appropriated \$16.7m to reopen Palmer Correctional Center (PCC) in 12 months.

Public Safety Risks: Crime University

- In 12/11/19 HSTA Hearing, ACOA President Randy McLellan noted that Alaskans placed in private prisons in Arizona and Colorado were forced to join gangs or seek protection from gangs in private prisons.
- ACOA noted that at least three gangs were brought back from private prisons:
 - The Low Lifes, a NY based prison gang.
 - The 1488s, a white supremacist prison gang.
 - The Native Brotherhood, formed to protect Alaska Native prisoners sent to prisons in the Lower 48.
- First-hand accounts from reentry experts and former prisoners show that Alaskan prisoners faced discrimination and threats because of racial injustice and gangs.



Crime & Courts

Feds indict members of white supremacist prison gang in Alaska on murder and racketeering charges

✍ Author: Madeline McGee ⓘ Updated: March 27, 2019 📅 Published March 27, 2019

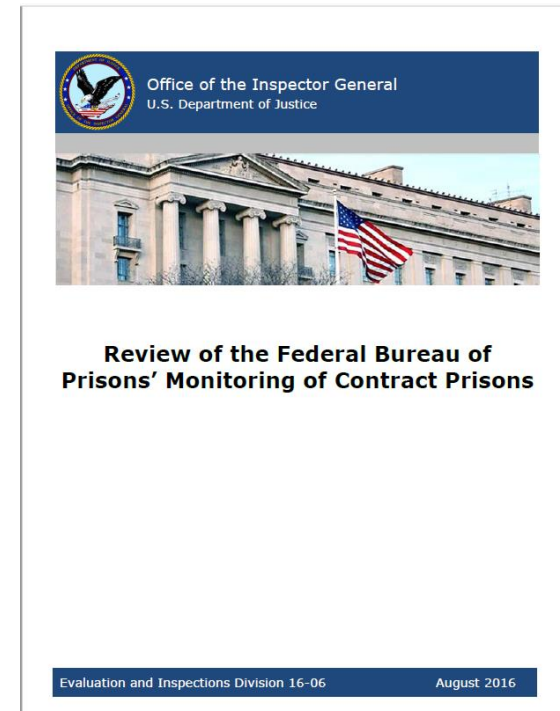
Private Prisons: Reentry and Rehabilitation Suffer

In the 12/11/19 HSTA hearing:

- Corrections Officer Josh Wilson of Alaska Correctional Officers Assoc. noted that elimination of rehabilitation and reentry opportunities will increase costs: 2017 Alaska Justice Information Center Survey of Reentry Efforts, every avoided conviction saves between \$100-\$150k dollars per conviction.
- Chet Adkins, Reentry Coordinator and South-Central Foundation Men's Wellness Expert described his experience as an Alaska Native prisoner: he described private prisons' elimination of cultural programs such as potlucks, reentry programs such as craft shops, and removal of counselors.
- The State of Alaska will still have to incur transportation costs to these remote prisons and will still be responsible for certain forms of medical care.
- Chet Adkins also described in his letters how he witnessed delayed or denied prisoner healthcare, resulting in death or debilitating lifelong conditions for multiple prisoners.

US Department of Justice

- ▶ • In 2016, the U.S. Dept of Justice decided to end use of private prisons following an administrative survey.
- ▶ • Concerns centered around rampant safety issues: of the private prisons contracted with the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), the survey found higher incidents in all categories measured: contraband, lockdowns, inmate discipline, sexual misconduct and more.
- ▶ • BOP report found they do not provide the same level of services, safety, or rehabilitative programs.



Other States:

- June 11th, 2019: NV Governor Steve Sisolak signs AB 183, prohibiting state from entering or renewing contract with private, for-profit prison companies.
- 22 other states do not use private prisons or prohibit their use.
- Since 2000, New York, Illinois, Iowa, Arkansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Nevada, North Dakota, Utah and Wisconsin have all prohibited their use.



Nevada bans use of private prisons

Contributed Jun 11, 2019 0

Other states: Florida

July 2019: Florida state accountability office ordered to perform study on Correctional Health Care in Florida Dept of Corrections (FDC):

- This study, by an independent auditor, recommended the state end its private healthcare contract.
- The estimated savings of doing so could reach as high as \$40-46 million a year.
- It noted that while cost savings appeared in the short term, consistent service that met contractual obligations was hard to meet-leading to contractor turnover, and terminated contracts, increased inmate health and safety risks and increased litigation.
- The same study recognizes Alaska's own system (state operated) as more inherently stable for attracting and retaining staff.

Miami Herald

FLORIDA POLITICS

Audit: Privatizing Florida's prison medical services was costly mistake

Health Care Study:
Florida Department of Corrections

November 13, 2019

Prepared by:



Thank you

Questions, comments