



## HB 292 Highlights

- The current structure of Alaska's drug laws fail to provide adequate deterrent and punishment for those importing large quantities of drugs into the state.
- Currently, a person distributing illegal drugs is charged based on the quantity of the drug. They may either be charged with a Class C felony (punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment) or a Class B felony (punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment). There is *no* Class A felony.
- **HB 292** eliminates this gap by creating an additional tier of drug offenses (a Class A felony).
  - Class A felonies are punishable by up to 20 years of imprisonment.
- The new offense created by **HB 292** would only apply to *high-level drug traffickers* (those trafficking 25 grams or more of heroin or 50 grams or more of methamphetamine).
  - To put that into perspective, heroin is typically sold by the dose, which is .1 gram. Therefore, 25 grams of heroin is 250 doses. Methamphetamine is sold in amounts of .5 gram – 1 gram. Therefore, 50 grams of methamphetamine is 25 to 50 doses. These are *well beyond* the amounts seen for personal use or amounts a user would sell to support their habit.
- Those trafficking large amounts of drugs are not low level, "middle man" users distributing to support their habit. These high level drug traffickers are typically connected to traffickers outside the state and contribute to Alaska's drug epidemic and crime rate in a significant way.
  - Given the current drug epidemic facing Alaskans, such a statute is necessary. **Heroin and methamphetamine are the most heavily imported controlled substances in Alaska.** National surveys have shown that methamphetamine contributes to violent crime and heroin is a contributor to property crime. (DPS Annual Drug Report, p. 18).

- Further, Alaska's geographical makeup and overtaxed law enforcement resources have made Alaska a profitable location for traffickers. Traffickers in Alaska can make *several times* what they can in the Lower 48.
- While the federal government also prosecutes drug traffickers, as administrations change so does the federal priority (or lack thereof) of federal drug enforcement in Alaska.
- Alaska's ability to focus on – and eliminate – high level drug traffickers should remain constant, regardless of federal priorities or resources. **HB 292** allows the State to better control the cases that should be pursued, while also adding a necessary deterrent.