28th Alaska State Legislature

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Senate Judiciary Committee

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Omnibus Crime/Corrections Bill

Version D

Senate Bill 64 implements proven-practices to reduce recidivism and cut the cost of corrections while maintaining public safety.

24/7 Sobriety Program: In an effort to reduce recidivism, a 24/7 Sobriety program is proposed for certain offenders during pre-trial or on probation. Hallmarks of the program include twice-a-day alcohol testing and swift and certain punishment if alcohol is consumed. 24/7 Sobriety is modeled after similar evidence-based programs in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana that have proven successful in reducing drunk driving and domestic violence.

Criminal Justice Commission: Establishes a commission to review, analyze and evaluate the effect of laws and practices within the state's criminal justice system.

Probation and Parole Accountability with Certain Enforcement (P.A.C.E.): The Commissioner shall establish a drug testing program for felons who are at high risk of violating their conditions of probation or parole. The program relies on swift and certain punishments to deter a probationer or parolee from using drugs and alcohol or otherwise violating their probation requirements.

Recidivism Reduction Fund: To address Alaska's rate of recidivism (2/3 of offenders return to prison within 3 years), a fund established in the Department of Corrections will grant money to transitional re-entry programs. This will help supply funds to residential treatment programs for those recently released from prison. Programs must include work placement, case management, and sober living.

Felony Theft Threshold: This bill increases the felony theft threshold from $500 to $750. The threshold was established in 1978 and has never been adjusted for inflation.

Custodial Interference: This bill creates a criminal offense of custodial interference in the second degree when a non-relative without custodial rights attempts to take or keeps a child from a lawful custodian. Currently, non-custodians who try to take a child can only be charged with criminal trespass. This section closes the loophole and creates a more serious criminal offense for attempted child abduction.

Credit for Time Served in Residential Treatment: A person will receive credit against a sentence of imprisonment for time spent in a residential treatment facility. Participants are restricted to the grounds of the facility unless permitted to leave for rehabilitative purposes that are limited to time & purpose. This incentivizes people to seek and pay for their own treatment.

Expanded Risk-Needs Assessments: The Department of Corrections would be required to conduct risk-needs assessments on all offenders incarcerated for 30 days or greater. This will improve the ability to link inmates to resources, reduce recidivism and improve policymakers' understanding of the offender population.