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SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 15

"An Act relating to credits toward a sentence of imprisonment and to good time deductions."

The state of Alaska faces rising incarceration costs, growing correctional populations, and declining financial resources. To face this challenge, Alaska must seek out alternatives which maximizes state financial resources while providing rehabilitative services for incarcerated individuals. It is the purpose of HB 15 to grant credit against a sentence of imprisonment and award good time deductions for time spent in a treatment program, in a private residence, or under electronic monitoring.

It is the mission of Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide secure confinement, reformatory programs, and provide a process of supervised community reintegration to enhance the safety of our communities. Under current statutes, a convicted prisoner is entitled to a deduction of one-third of the term of imprisonment under good time deductions if the prisoner follows the rules of the correctional facility in which the prisoner is confined. However, if a prisoner spends any time in a treatment program or while under electronic monitoring they are ineligible. The penalization for seeking treatment, maintaining employment, or starting the process of reintegration into the community stands in stark contrast to the goals outlined by DOC.

A diverse range of programs are available to prisoners to facilitate an individual's reintegration. Electronic Monitoring (EM) is a tool utilized by DOC that provides cost effective supervision of offenders while reducing recidivism. The EM program allows qualified incarcerated individuals to serve time at home while adhering to the program conditions. Qualified individuals can gain access to community-based treatment, maintain employment, access diverse medical treatment, perform community service work, and begin the process of reintegration. The ability to grant credit against a sentence of imprisonment for time spent under supervision of electronic monitoring or within a treatment program can potentially save the state of Alaska over twelve million dollars a year.

The State of Alaska has an opportunity to substantially save money while increasing Alaskans access to community-based treatments, ability to maintain employment, and reduce recidivism. HB 15 promotes the mission of DOC by encouraging the use of reformatory programs while fostering community based reintegration.

Thank you for your support of HB 15.