

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
November 16, 2015
9:05 a.m.

[9:05:44 AM](#)

[NOTE: Meeting was held in Anchorage, Alaska at the Legislative Information Office]

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Saddler called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Dan Saddler, Vice-Chair
Representative Les Gara
Representative Lynn Gattis
Representative Cathy Munoz
Representative Lance Pruitt

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Terry Schuster, Senior Associate, Pew Charitable Trust, Public Safety Performance Project; Joshua Wilson, Spokesman, Alaska Correctional Officers Association; Suzanne DiPietro, Executive Director, Alaska Judicial Council.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Representative Steve Thompson, Co-Chair, Representative Bryce Edgmon, Representative David Guttenberg, Representative Scott Kawasaki, Representative Tammie Wilson, Representative Charisse Millet.

SUMMARY

^PRESENTATION: ALASKA PRISON GROWN DRIVERS AND COSTS

[9:07:21 AM](#)

TERRY SCHUSTER, SENIOR ASSOCIATE, PEW CHARITABLE TRUST, PUBLIC SAFETY PERFORMANCE PROJECT, introduced himself. He explained that the Pew was charged with the task of analyzing the state's prison systems, and the costs thereof. He discussed the presentation, "The Pew Charitable Trusts; Alaska Prison Growth Drivers and Costs" (copy on file).

Mr. Schuster looked at slide 1, "Prison Population Up 27 percent in Last Decade." He stated that the prison population in Alaska had grown 27 percent over the decade. He stressed that it was significant growth over a ten year period. By comparison, the resident population growth in Alaska was 10 percent over the same period of time. He stressed that the prison population was growing roughly three times as fast as the resident population.

Mr. Schuster highlighted slide 2, "Prison Population is Half Sentenced Offenders, Half Supervision Violators and Pretrial Defendants." He stated that the pie graph represented a snapshot of the prison population on July 1, 2014 by status. He noted that one-half of the prison population were sentenced offenders. He stated that approximately one-quarter of the prison population were pretrial. He concluded that slightly less than one-quarter of the prison population were supervision violators.

Representative Gattis wondered if the supervision violators could also be considered pre-trial inmates.

Mr. Schuster responded that those supervision violators are separate.

Representative Gattis was hoping for additional information regarding the supervision violators.

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Vice-Chair Saddler asked for a brief snap shot of what the Pew Charitable Trust does, its mission, and performance.

Mr. Schuster explained that the Pew Charitable Trust was a public charity, involved in many different projects across the country related to research or technical assistance related to government performance.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked if Pew was motivated by any particular philosophy.

Mr. Schuster responded that the assistance provided by Pew was paid for by the Pew Foundation. The Pew family made their money with the Sun Oil Company, and the children put most of the inherited money into a charitable trust for the public good.

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Vice-Chair Saddler looked at slide 2, and wondered how the prison population status distribution compared to other states. He asked if Alaska could be considered an outlier.

Mr. Schuster replied that it was difficult to compare Alaska to other states, because the other states were set up in counties. The county jails were separate from the state prison systems. The population in county jails would not be included in the state prison system numbers.

Mr. Schuster addressed slide 3, "Largest Growth Among Pretrial Inmates." He restated that there had been significant prison population growth over ten years. He shared that there was an attempt to understand the driving factors related to prison population growth.

Representative Gara remarked that there was an issue of crimes going from misdemeanors to felonies because of inflation. He wondered if other states updated the fines charged to criminal defendants, and the amounts that may increase the level of crime. He stressed that the inflation-impacted increase in crime level cost the state significant money.

Mr. Schuster responded that other states had raised the threshold in their statutes for when the value of a stolen item counts as a felony as opposed to a misdemeanor in order to track inflation. He shared that there were some jurisdictions that were examining an automatic index to inflation. The recommendations for Alaska were still being worked out in the Criminal Justice Commission.

Representative Gara asked if he could get any publications from other 23 states that could be supplied to the committee.

Mr. Schuster replied that Pew was independently interested in the topic, so there was a team of PHD criminologists who were working on a number of publications including the examination of the 23 states who had raised their felony threshold, and the relation of crime versus collection of restitution. He did not know when the publication would be made available.

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Representative Gara stated that he was disappointed that the publication was not yet available.

Mr. Schuster stated that Pew was aware that there was not a measurable connection between crime rates and the felony theft threshold.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked if the information that Pew had was broken down into regions in the state.

Mr. Schuster replied that there was raw data available, but there had not been queried data for the current presentation.

Mr. Schuster highlighted slide 4, "Pretrial Defendants Make Up 28 Percent of Alaska's Prison Population." He stated that the pretrial population would be discussed for the next few slides.

Mr. Schuster looked at slide 5, "Number of Pretrial Defendants Up 81 Percent in Last Decade." The line graph showed the growth in the pretrial population over the last decade. He remarked that the last five years showed an increase in pretrial population by 81 percent. He stressed that there were two contributing factors to that growth: 1) more people were arrested and brought to jail pretrial; and 2) people were spending longer periods of time detained pretrial.

Mr. Schuster addressed slide 6, "Pretrial Admissions Down 13 Percent, But Still High Numbers of Nonviolent Misdemeanor Admissions." He noted that the different collars in the bar graphs represented the severity of the offense. The top color was nonviolent misdemeanor offences; the second portion was violent misdemeanor offences; the third portion was nonviolent felony offences; and the

bottom portion was violent felony offences. He remarked that the numbers were reduced from 2005.

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Mr. Schuster displayed slide 7, "Average Pretrial Length of Stay Up." He stated that the lighter blue bars represented average length of stay in prison in 2005, and the darker blue bars represented average length of stay in 2014. He noted that the length of stay had increase across the board. He stressed that the examination on referred to the amount of time between the time someone was arrested and when they were released pretrial. He noted that some people were detained the entire period of time before they were convicted; and for others they posted bail to be released earlier. He remarked that the bars on the far right showed that the average length of stay for a person arrested for a nonviolent misdemeanor charge was six days pretrial, and the current average was nine days. He stressed that the three day increase may not seem significant, but pointed out that the multiplication of 3 days by over 11,000 people was a significant number of days.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked why the increase in length of prison stays.

Mr. Schuster responded that the question was very difficult. He suggested that one possibility was that the bail amounts were being set were remarkably high.

Representative Gattis suggested in looking at the previous ten years. She wondered why he could not go back to look at the more previous ten years.

Mr. Schuster responded that any aggregate data was not available.

Representative Gattis assumed that the data was already in the system on Courtview.

Mr. Schuster could not remember what the determination was on Courtview.

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Representative Pruitt recalled that Pew was tasked in examining DOC. He felt that looking at the pretrial

population would not be able to provide the full challenge as related to the corrections population.

Mr. Schuster relayed that the corrections population were there as a result of many different decision makers. He stated that Pew was examining various policy makers.

Representative Pruitt thanked Mr. Schuster for the clarification. He believed that it was more than just corrections being looked at.

Mr. Schuster reported that the commission would provide statutory and budgetary changes. He stated that the commission had conducted outreach to many stakeholder groups, including crime victim roundtables. He stressed that many of the recommendations were related to administrative changes. He stressed that the commission was charged in providing statutory and budgetary changes.

Representative Munoz wondered if Pew was able to identify particular statutory changes that had occurred since 2005, and their impact on the prison population.

Mr. Schuster replied in the affirmative. He noted that, like the pretrial population, the growth in the sentenced population was not related to more people being sentenced. Rather, the growth was due to many people spending slightly more time in prison.

[9:35:39 AM](#)

Representative Edgmon felt that Alaska had an inordinate amount of pretrial prisoners. He queried the comparison to other states of pretrial prisoners.

Mr. Schuster replied that the question was difficult to answer, because Alaska's prison population housed people in the state prison. He stressed that other states' pretrial and one-year sentence or less population would be separated in county jails.

Representative Edgmon wondered how the commission would be able to properly analyze without the possibility to compare to other states.

Mr. Schuster responded that the commission would be making recommendations based on data that should be tracked from

the current day forward. He stressed that the policy package put forth by the legislature be actually implemented. He stressed that the analysis should be based on the expectation of the policy.

Co-Chair Thompson remarked that, since 2005, there was mandatory minimum sentencing legislation. He wondered if that legislation had an effect on length of stay in the pretrial. He also noted that it was more difficult for individuals to be released on bail. He queried the effect on the number of individuals tried, and the number of individuals in the pretrial population.

Mr. Schuster responded that he had not measured those queries. He remarked that that he had heard anecdotally that the presumptive sentences had increased significantly for sex offenders, so many people were entering into trial because of the avoidance of plea deals.

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Representative Gara wanted to reduce the number of nonviolent offenders in prison, but was not yet convinced about the statistic. He noted that the pretrial population was expensive, unless the substantial majority could be given "time served" for their eventual sentence. He wondered if there was really a savings.

Mr. Schuster agreed. He shared that the commission was going to make changes to pretrial and sentencing changes.

Representative Gara felt that there should be a conversation with practitioners who have asserted that there is 24 hour third party custody for very minor crimes. He remarked that he had seen that occurrence while he practiced criminal law.

Mr. Schuster replied that the commission had conducted public meeting outreach. He stressed that the commission had travelled to remote and rural communities to listen to stake holder groups. He also stated that the commission had solicited input and feedback from prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, crime victims, researchers, academics, system practitioners, and families of incarcerated individuals. He stressed that the information could not be quantified.

Mr. Schuster displayed slide 8, "Sentenced Offenders Make Up 50 Percent of Alaska's Prison Population."

Mr. Schuster looked at slide 9, "Number of Sentenced Inmates UP 14 Percent in Last Decade." He remarked that the sentenced population had grown over ten years. He stated that the sentenced population was not growing as fast as the pretrial population, but there was a higher number of people.

Representative Gara wondered if the numbers were adjusted for population of the state.

Mr. Schuster responded that the resident population had increased by approximately 10 percent over the ten year period.

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Mr. Schuster addressed slide 10, "Despite Declines, 82 Percent of Prison Admission Are Misdemeanants." He explained that the slide highlighted that fewer people were sentenced

Vice-Chair Saddler asked if the numbers were raw numbers.

Mr. Schuster replied that the numbers were raw numbers.

Representative Pruitt surmised that the committee was currently looking at a snap shot of 2005 and 2013. He wondered if the slide represented a trend.

Mr. Schuster responded in the affirmative. He stressed that over time the number of admissions had decreased.

Mr. Schuster explained the color blocking on the slide was based on the severity of the convictions. He explained what the colors of the bars meant.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked for Mr. Schuster to explain a violent misdemeanor.

Mr. Schuster replied that a violent misdemeanor was a misdemeanor assault such as a bar fight or a minor domestic violence incident.

Mr. Schuster highlighted slide 11, "Felony Length of Stay Up Across Nonviolent Offense Categories." He explained that the light blue bars represented the average length of stay in 2005, and the dark blue bars represented the average length of stay in 2014. He noted that there was an increase in average length of stay for people who were sentenced to a prison term. He noted that the property and drug offenders were currently staying in prison an average of one month longer. He stated that alcohol and public order offenders were staying approximately three months longer than in 2005. He stressed that the small increase multiplied across by thousands of people adds up to many prison beds that the state was not using previously.

Vice-Chair Saddler wondered if a pretrial offender was in a separate facility from a sentenced offender.

Mr. Schuster was unsure how to answer the question. He stated that there were pretrial wings of prisons and some facilities that were pretrial designated. He assumed that almost every facility in the state had a combination of both pretrial and sentenced offenders.

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JOSHUA WILSON, SPOKESMAN, ALASKA CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION, stated that there were some state facilities that were strictly sentenced facilities, but most facilities also had pretrial facilities. He stressed that the state had a unified system, so both pretrial and sentenced offenders were in the same system.

Representative Gara stressed that there was a heroin addiction epidemic in the state. He remarked that many heroin addicts faced a very difficult time getting admitted to a heroin treatment facility. He wondered if there was an analysis of the cost of heroin treatment and jail time.

Mr. Schuster replied that, in Alaska, it cost approximately 142 per day to house someone in prison. He stressed that treatment facilities would be significantly less expensive. He furthered that he did not know if an inpatient treatment facility would be cheaper than prison costs. He shared that justice reinvestment in the country was focusing on using the prison beds for the most violent offenders.

Vice-Chair Saddler wondered if the recommendations would be included in the report.

Mr. Schuster replied that the data would be included in the commission's report.

Mr. Schuster discussed slide 12, "Felony Length of Stay up 17 Percent for Person Offenders; 86 Percent for Sex Offenders." The average length of stay for violent offenders had also increased. He noted that the graph had examined only individuals who were already released.

Representative Pruitt asked if Pew was addressing how to deal with felony sex offenders that were released.

Mr. Schuster responded that there were conditions that applied specifically to sex offenders. He stated that the Criminal Justice Commission had a longer life span than the technical assistance provided by Pew. He stated that Pew provided assistance around justice reinvestment, which was about more effective outcomes in public safety.

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Representative Pruitt wondered if the collateral consequences were considered cost drivers, or whether there was a need to not focus on the collateral consequences.

Mr. Schuster responded that there were many factors that were easy to put into projections. He stressed that Pew did not feel comfortable dealing with collateral consequences like programs aimed at reducing recidivism. He stressed that Pew could not run those numbers through a projection mode.

Representative Gara remarked that sex offences ranged from unspeakable acts to lower level crimes. He stated that the lowest level of a sex offence was someone who touched someone through their clothing now had a four year minimum prison sentence, and he felt that it was "insane" in most cases. He felt that the sentence should be based on the facts in the case. He wondered if there was an examination of the categories of sex offences, and the impact on the prison populations.

Mr. Schuster replied in the affirmative. He stated that most people currently in prison from a sex offence were there for a very serious sex offence.

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Vice-Chair Saddler asked about the age of the prison population growth.

Mr. Schuster responded that the fastest growing segment of the prison population was people 51-years-old and older, but was not the largest prison population. He stated that the cost benefit begins to flip when the population begins aging. He stressed that the older prisoners were the most expensive prisoners to house in terms of medical care.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked why the largest prison population was over 51.

Mr. Schuster replied that there were two types of people that added to prison growth: 1) individuals who enter the prison system and stay for a short time; and 2) those who stay in prison for a long time. He stressed that more people who were sentenced to long stays in prison increased the population of older prisoners, because they were not going to be released. He shared that some states had been examining a geriatric parole option.

Representative Guttenberg asked about behavior predictability. He was concerned with changes crimes surrounding the legalization of marijuana and whether Pew was tracking the effect in Colorado or other states that have legalized the drug.

Mr. Schuster responded that there would be recommendations to determine risk management.

[10:13:20 AM](#)

Mr. Schuster looked at slide 13, "Supervision Violators make Up 22 Percent of Alaska's Prison Population." He shared that someone who commits a new crime would show up in the pretrial category.

Mr. Schuster displayed slide 14, "Number of Supervision Violators Up 15 Percent in Last Decade." He explained that

the vertical bars covered 2205 violators and those in 2014/.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked how Alaska's numbers compared to those of other states.

Mr. Schuster responded that supervision violations was an area that was a focus for reform throughout the nation.

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Representative Gara wondered if there was a correlation between the availability of substance abuse treatment at the population of supervision violators.

Mr. Schuster mentioned the program "24/7". The program did drug testing twice a day. He stated that for some of the population having to be accountable twice a day helped to reduce the chance of violating supervision.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked if alcohol and drug abuse treatment seem to be effective.

Mr. Schuster responded that substance abuse was predictive of future criminal behavior, but it was not the most predictive of future criminal behavior. He stressed that there were other factors like antisocial thinking patterns that were much more predictive.

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Vice-Chair Saddler asked Mr. Schuster to further explain.

Mr. Schuster responded that there were risk factors that made someone likely to commit crime in the future. He stated that some factors could never be changed. He shared that the age at first arrest was very predictive of future criminal behavior; current criminal history; current age; and the historic ages that make someone more likely to engage in criminal behavior that could not be changed by programming. He stated that antisocial thinking patterns; substance abuse; employment; and family relationships could be changed by programming.

Mr. Schuster addressed slide 15, "Nearly Half of Revocations Staying More Than One Month; 29 Percent More

Than Three Months." He explained that the next few slides would be related to recidivism and costs.

Mr. Schuster discussed slide 16, "Almost Two-Thirds of Offenders Released Return to Prison Within Three Years." He stated that the left hand bar represented the portion of offenders who were released from prison in FY 02 who returned to prison within three years. He announced 71 percent of people released from prison returned to prison on or before 2005. He explained that 63 percent of people released in FY 11 returned to prison by 2014. The good news was that recidivism had gone down in Alaska. He stated that there were many programs that were effective at reducing recidivism.

Representative Pruitt asked if the numbers reflected people who had committed another crimes or parole violators.

Mr. Schuster responded that the numbers included any return to prison including parole violations and those arrested but not convicted.

Mr. Schuster stressed that a recidivism rate of 63 percent was still considered a high number. He stressed that, despite the growth in the prison population, there were not necessarily great results in terms of the return on investment in recidivism.

Vice-Chair Saddler queried Alaska compared to other states.

Mr. Schuster relayed that it was difficult to determine because Alaska was unique. He stressed that a return to prison in Alaska would be different than a return to prison in another state. He stated that the return included things that the other states would weed out. The other states may not include a return to jail, because Alaska did not have jails they only had prisons.

Vice-Chair Saddler suggested that the numbers seemed obtainable.

Mr. Schuster replied that there may not be a way to compare Alaska to the other states.

Mr. Schuster looked at slide 17, "Spending on Corrections Up 60 Percent Over Past 2 Decades." The slide did not show adjustments for inflation, but rather only the actual

numbers from 1995 to 2014 of the operating budget for DOC. He explained that there was an increase of 60 percent, when adjusted for inflation. He stressed that the graph did not include capital expenses.

Vice-Chair Saddler clarified that there was a 60 percent increase, with the adjustment for inflation.

Mr. Schuster agreed.

Vice-Chair Saddler assumed that it was a raw number.

Mr. Schuster agreed that it was only a dollar increase...

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Representative Gattis wondered whether the \$142 per inmate included the operating costs, or whether it included the proration of capital.

Mr. Schuster answered that the \$142 a day was a number provided by DOC. He assumed it was operating costs.

Mr. Schuster highlighted slide 18, "Absent Further Reform, Prison Population Projected to Grow 27 Percent, Costing At Least \$169 Million." He explained that the slide looked back ten years and forward ten years. He pointed that the prison population grew. He stressed that another 1400 beds would be occupied in the following 10 years.

Vice-Chair Saddler queried the impact of the change in marijuana offenses.

Mr. Schuster stated that the projected increase was based on the previous growth rate and that no policy changes were considered.

Representative Gara wondered if the largest increase in prison cost was attributed to the increase in sentence stay.

Mr. Schuster replied in the affirmative. He explained that the increase in the prison population was largely driven by longer lengths of stay for the sentence and pretrial population.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked if there was any correlation between the number of crimes committed in the state and the number of people incarcerated. He wondered if one could assume that there would be fewer crimes committed in the general population, if more people were incarcerated.

Mr. Schuster stated that criminologists were very interested in that question. He stated that largest crime decline in the country was in the mid-90s. There was a question of whether the crime decline was caused by the prison expansion, and they determined that prison expansion had a role in the crime decline in the 1990s. He stated that there were varied estimates about the portion of decline. He stated that approximately 10 to 30 percent of the crime decline was related to more imprisonment. He stressed that it was difficult to correlate the exact cause of the increase in incarceration. He also asserted that, at the time, "baby boomers" were aging out of crime. He also stated that there had been a waning in the crack epidemic, which decreased the number of violent crimes. He also announced that there were changes in policing and personal security practices. He stated that, since the 1990s, the value of putting a person in prison was significantly less than the 1990s.

Vice-Chair Saddler observed that there was nuance of cause and effect.

Mr. Schuster replied in the affirmative as it related to crime. He stated that, with regard to recidivism, there was significant research about what works to reduce recidivism.

[10:39:12 AM](#)

Representative Pruitt wanted to hear more about the effects of electronic monitoring and its impact. He wondered if it was affecting costs to the state.

Mr. Schuster responded that Alaska had a couple of different types of electronic monitoring. He explained the monitoring process. There was a private electronic monitoring company as well that would equate to a third-party custodian. In terms of cost, electronic monitoring was much more affordable than a hard prison bed.

Representative Pruitt wondered if there was data to examine other state's electronic monitoring practices.

Mr. Schuster responded that there were people out there saying that electronic monitoring worked. However, it was difficult to determine conclusive research, because there may not be enough evidence, because most of the evidence was anecdotal.

Representative Pruitt wondered if there were any states that felt electronic monitoring did not work at all.

Mr. Schuster replied that he did not have a definitive answer. He asserted that there were arguments for and against electronic monitoring.

Representative Pruitt asked if Mr. Schuster when the type of analysis would be available.

Mr. Schuster responded that it would probably be available in three to five years.

Representative Pruitt asked why that timeline.

Mr. Schuster responded that the research needed that much time for data to be collected and analyzed.

[10:46:16 AM](#)

Representative Wilson wanted to clarify that the state would have to wait three to five years to see if the electronic monitoring was effective.

Mr. Schuster responded that the legislature could require that certain outcomes be tracked.

Representative Wilson asked about the 50 percent that were currently under electronic monitoring data.

Mr. Schuster did not know the answer to Representative Wilson's question.

Representative Wilson asked if the specific recommendations would be included in the report.

Mr. Schuster confirmed that policy recommendations would be provided in the report. He added that dollar amounts would be provided in the report as well.

Representative Wilson asked if the committee could request that the Department of Corrections could provide their numbers in the electronic monitoring program.

Vice-Chair Saddler agreed to provide that information.

[10:50:31 AM](#)

Representative Gara relayed he had received an anonymous complaint about the difficulty of collecting data.

Mr. Schuster addressed slide 19, "Next Steps":

- Alaska Criminal Justice Commission policy development meetings
 - Sept. 9-10
 - Oct. 14-15
 - Nov. 18-19
- Report and recommendations from the Commission
 - Dec. 10

Vice-Chair Saddler commented that the committee would be interested in the report and recommendations.

Mr. Schuster relayed that members of Pew would be willing to answer questions during the legislative session.

Vice-Chair Saddler noted that the contact information was in the presentation, and wondered if the public would contact Mr. Schuster with questions.

Mr. Schuster stated that questions could be directed through him. He mentioned other individuals as well.

[10:53:43 AM](#)

Representative Munoz stated that she had recently been contacted by a local family. The individual had a mental illness. She wondered if the commission had had an opportunity to review recidivism and mental health issues.

Mr. Schuster responded that the commission had spent. One of the commission members was the head of the Alaska Mental

Health Trust Authority. There would be some recommendations that mental health treatment would be recommended.

Representative Munoz indicated that her office had studied the actions of other states, and found a law in Washington where a family could commission the court for involuntary commitment for mental health treatment. She wondered if the commission had examined a similar issue.

Mr. Schuster replied that he did not believe that the commission had looked into that topic. She shared that the commission was aware of the topic, and may be considered after the legislative session.

Representative Munoz shared that she would follow up with the commission.

[10:57:17 AM](#)

Representative Edgmon commended Mr. Schuster for the presentation. He asked if any research had been conducted - anything having to do with Alaska tribes.

Mr. Schuster stated that the recommendations would be coming out soon and he was unclear if something specific to Alaska tribes. He elaborated that trips to some Ms. Fowler rural Alaska occurred.

Representative Edgmon mentioned the first slide. He queried any analysis of the Alaska tribes as related to the prison system.

Mr. Schuster stated that there was a disproportioned number of Alaska Natives confined in the Alaska prison system. He shared that Alaska Natives represented approximately 15 percent of the resident population in the state, and represented approximately 36 percent of the prison population. He furthered that they represented approximately 42 percent of the probation and parole violator population.

Representative Edgmon commented that he wanted the information on record. He appreciated the response.

Representative Gara stressed that there must be a reduction to the number of people who would ever commit a crime. He wondered if there were strategies to reduce the number of

people who commit crimes. He shared that there were studies that revealed that low income people who had access to quality pre-K education committed crimes in smaller numbers.

Mr. Schuster replied that Pew was more likely to examine the impact over the next ten years, rather than an examination of impact up to 30 years. He stated that he was not familiar with the research related to pre-K. He announced that Alaska already set aside money for prevention.

Representative Gara remarked that there was a statewide decrease in funding, so he wondered if increased policing would reduce crime.

Mr. Schuster replied that he did not know that research. He stated that there had been remarkable changes in police practices over thirty years that had impacted crime. He shared that crime had steadily decreased nationwide since the 1990s.

[11:06:29 AM](#)

Vice-Chair Saddler suggested that Pew's focus was not on crime prevention, rather on recidivism.

Mr. Schuster relayed that Pew's focus had been on the data related to the growth in the prison population.

Vice-Chair Saddler stressed that Pew was attempting to perform a specific job for a specific tool.

Representative Gattis asked if the report would address the effective and ineffective Alaska programs.

Mr. Schuster replied that Pew was conducting two separate projects. He stated that there was one project titled "Justice Reinvestment" and the other was titled "Results First." He shared that both projects focused on criminal justice. He explained that Results First was intended to help the state create a budget tool that identified the cost benefit of all the programs that exist in the state.

Representative Gattis asked if the program would address her question. Mr. Schuster replied in the affirmative.

Representative Gattis mentioned Youth Court. She wondered if the program would be examined by the commission.

Mr. Schuster replied that the commission had not yet come to a recommendation consensus. He shared that there were many specialty court programs in the country and the state. The specialty court programs had proven effective. He stated that the programs did not always have a large capacity, so they could not handle many people. As a result, the program may be at a high cost, even with a high benefit.

Representative Gattis wondered if the committee would receive the data.

Mr. Schuster responded there was a separate project that may address that question.

Representative Gattis asked if there was anyone in the audience that could answer her question.

SUZANNE DIPIETRO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA JUDICIAL COUNCIL, explained that she was working with the university on the Results First project. She explained that the first phase of the project was drafting a list of all programs in the state that were designed to reduce recidivism and gather information on the cost of the programs.

[11:11:09 AM](#)

Representative Gattis surmised that the cost benefit analysis would not be available until after another nine months, and the other project would be available in December 2016. She felt that the committee would be asked to make a decision without all of the information.

Mr. Schuster responded that there were two separate initiatives: 1) provide the committee with the tools to make budgeting decisions; and 2) a process to look at the growth in the prison populations.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked Ms. DiPietro to describe who was in charge of the Results First program.

Ms. DiPietro responded that the Results First program was a project through the Pew Charitable Trust and the MacArthur Foundation. The program was currently housed at the

University of Alaska Justice Center. She stated that it was a newly created organization, and deferred to others who may know the name. She shared that there was a multi-agency steering committee on the project.

Vice-Chair Saddler surmised that there were many different programs and efforts.

Representative Guttenberg wanted to talk more about keeping people out of the system. He mentioned that the average reading ability in prison was third grade. He asked about comprehensive work done in increasing education levels and whether that helped recidivism.

Mr. Schuster stated that there was education. He stated that education level was not a measure of reducing future crimes.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked if there was any research done regarding recidivism rates as related to a low unemployment rate economy.

Mr. Schuster did not know the answer to the question.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked if there were further questions.

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ADJOURNMENT

[11:18:14 AM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m.