

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION
October 30, 2017
5:02 p.m.

5:02:01 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Foster called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Paul Seaton, Co-Chair
Representative Les Gara, Vice-Chair
Representative Jason Grenn
Representative David Guttenberg
Representative Scott Kawasaki
Representative Dan Ortiz
Representative Lance Pruitt
Representative Steve Thompson
Representative Cathy Tilton
Representative Tammie Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Robert Coghill, Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Juneau; Darryl Anders, Self, Juneau; Kara Nelson, Self, Juneau; Christine Furey, Self, Ketchikan; Denni R. Starr, Self, Juneau; Charles High, Self, Juneau; Talia Eames, Coordinator, Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Juneau; Lindsay Terry, Self, Juneau; Haley High, Self, Juneau; Michael Starr, Self, Juneau; Chloe Abbott, Self, Juneau; Antonio Prescott, Self, Juneau; Representative Zach Fansler; Representative Ivy Sponholz; Representative Justin Parish; Representative Dan Saddler; Representative Lora Reinbold; Representative Andy Josephson.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Carl Berger, Self, Anchorage; Robin Smith, Self, Anchorage; Laura Bonner, Self, Anchorage; Donald McLean, Self, Mat-Su; Steve St. Clair, Self, Mat-Su; Abby St. Clair, Self, Mat-Su; Troy Jarvis, Alaska Auto Dealers Association, Lithia Automotive, Alaska, Anchorage; Lynette Clark, Self, Fox; Raina Costello, Self, Juneau; Charles McKee, Self, Anchorage; Doug White, Self/Access Alaska, Anchorage; Tara Rich, ACLU of Alaska, Anchorage; Joe Schlanger, Self, Mat-Su; Samantha Abernathy, Self, Juneau; Johnny Murdock, Self, Wasilla; Billy Charles, Self, Emmonak; Casey DenAdell, Self, Juneau; Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus, Self, Kiana; Janet McCabe, Self, Anchorage; Nelly Perez, Self/Alaska Native Justice Center, Anchorage; Mary Geddes, Self, Anchorage; Devon Urquhart, Anchorage Reentry Coalition, Anchorage; Michael Powell, Self, Anchorage; Michael Albertson, Self, North Pole; Vicki Wallner, Stop Valley Thieves, Palmer; Karen Jenkins, Self, Anchorage; Nichole Giller, Self, Anchorage; Sarah Jo Theis, Self, Anchorage; Lee Breinig, Self, Anchorage; Bruce Schulte, Self, Anchorage; Matt Steele, Self, Wasilla; David Nees, Self, Anchorage; Nicole McCabe, Self, Juneau; Cathy Berbanske, Self, Haines; Steven Wright, Self, Wasilla; Sherry Miller, Self, Eagle River; Damita Duplantis, Self, Anchorage; Deana Cresap, Self, Chugiak; Stephen Duplantis, Self, Anchorage; Ron Crawl, Self, Eagle River; Richard Busk, Self, Anchorage; Chris McLain, Self, Fairbanks; Chris Eichenlaub, Self, Eagle River; Deborah McIntyre, Self, Anchorage; Noria Clark, Self, Anchorage; Mary Alice McKeen, Self, Juneau; Michael Sheldon, Self, Petersburg; Tyson Bundy, Self, Anchorage; Georgia Kustura, Self, Chugiak; Kit Roberts, Self, Palmer; Nick Turenne, Self, Fairbanks; Bob Barndt, Self, Eagle River; Michelle Overstreet, Self, Wasilla; Stacey Korsmo, Self, Anchorage; Barbara Petek, Self, Anchorage; Illodor Merculieff, Self, Saint Paul Island; Sarah Evans, Self, Dillingham.

SUMMARY

SB 54 CRIME AND SENTENCING

SB 54 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Foster addressed the meeting agenda.

#sb54

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 54(FIN)

"An Act relating to crime and criminal law; relating to violation of condition of release; relating to sex trafficking; relating to sentencing; relating to imprisonment; relating to parole; relating to probation; relating to driving without a license; relating to the pretrial services program; and providing for an effective date."

[5:03:05 PM](#)

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: STATEWIDE

[5:05:01 PM](#)

ROBERT COGHILL, ADVISORY BOARD ON ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE, JUNEAU, testified in support of the legislation. He shared information about his professional background. He detailed that the advisory board was an enthusiastic supporter of SB 91 [criminal justice reform legislation that passed in 2016]. He underscored that treatment worked and there were opportunities for treatment with criminal justice reform. He highlighted that 40 percent of individuals incarcerated in Alaska were beneficiaries of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA). He stated the individuals needed treatment and there were things in place to help get better and more treatment. He discussed that the decision to offend was not like buying a car or a home; it was a matter of impulse and of conditions people were in. He explained that if the state could provide treatment to the individuals, offences would be less likely. He did not believe it was wise to dismantle the criminal justice reform legislation [SB 91] before giving it a chance to work.

DARRYL ANDERS, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in support of the legislation. He shared a story about his past personal experience as a felon and drug addict. He provided detail about his life and past incarceration. He stated that the war on drugs had been a failure. He stressed that incarceration for addicts was the wrong approach. He shared that when someone was incarcerated for a long time, the ripple effect went far and wide. The individuals lost any stability they may have had and were separated from friends and family, with no ability to contribute to society. He underscored that the cost was incredible. He had been

sentenced to 10 years on his third drug offence. He relayed that help had not been available. He emphasized the importance of giving SB 91 a chance to work. He believed it was necessary to look at treatment options, classes, and mental health. He communicated that addicts were not always capable of making rational and futurist decisions. He spoke to the devastating impacts of drug addiction on lives and families. He stated that until a person walked in the shoes of an addict, the situation was difficult to understand. He shared that he had ultimately received treatment and help and had been sober for 4.5 years. He underscored the astronomical cost of incarceration and that incarceration only made the problem worse. He suggested the idea of setting up a fund that petty thieves could pay into to reimburse the community, rather than incarcerating individuals for petty crimes. He reasoned that incarceration was inevitable if a person committed a crime more than two or three times.

Representative Guttenberg thanked Mr. Anders for testifying.

Representative Tilton thanked Mr. Anders and referred to his testimony about being sober for 4.5 years. She asked for detail about the turning point for him.

Mr. Anders replied that he had struggled with addiction his entire life. He shared that his turning point was taking a 2.5-year theology course while incarcerated. He had also received treatment and had participated in a support group. Prior to that the war on drugs had been a revolving door resulting in getting in and out of prison. He stressed the importance of addressing the situation, especially for young users. He believed putting young users through courses and teaching them morals, basic life skills, and how to feel good about themselves, would be beneficial. He detailed that many individuals he had encountered in prison had been psychologically or mentally abused. He noted that under SB 91 when an individual went to jail they were assessed and evaluated to determine what they needed and what they were lacking in terms of education or other. He thought more individual attention was needed in prison - typically people were treated as a group.

[5:14:43 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster noted that Representative Pruitt had joined the meeting.

Representative Wilson asked if Mr. Anders had received treatment in prison.

Mr. Anders replied in the affirmative. He had received two treatment programs. One had been by choice and the other had been part of his federal management plan. He detailed that the program laid out a format of things the individual should accomplish depending on their crime and history. The items could include anger management, criminal aptitude tests, and other. He had graduated from an Akeela House program that had been offered in the prison; however, he did not believe the organization had a contract with the prison any longer. He stressed that there was currently no treatment in prison. There was a small 12-step program at Wildwood and he was uncertain there was anything at Lemon Creek. When he had been at Lemon Creek there had been a 12-week class that was not intense enough. He thought current plans were to offer more treatment programs in communities. He believed having programs in prisons was not a bad idea. He thought aptitude tests were necessary for each individual. He emphasized that prisoners were manipulative. He had thought about the best way to use funds on programs to reduce recidivism and failure. He stressed that someone had to want to change.

[5:18:31 PM](#)

KARA NELSON, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in support of the bill. She thanked the committee for the opportunity to testify. She thanked the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission and the governor for their work on the subject. She was a recovering substance user and she had been incarcerated. She was currently the director of the Haven House in Juneau and had been sober since 2011. She detailed that Haven House was a peer-led, faith-based recovery residence for women coming home after incarceration. She shared her personal story. She shared that she had three children who also had to walk her path. She detailed that substance use and mental health disorders had been criminalized and homelessness and poverty went together. She opined that instead of elevating the supports in communities, the state was expecting the Department of Corrections to take care of all the community supports that should be offered elsewhere. She pointed out that she had seen a shift in the

discussions regarding criminal justice reform. She referenced the current addiction epidemic and noted there were more treatment beds and reentry services, although they were not financed as they should be. She had seen institutions across the state and was working to be a solution. She was not the exception, she had been given exceptional opportunities. She currently worked to walk hundreds of Alaskans through the process. She emphasized the importance of being vigilant.

Ms. Nelson spoke to the public condemnation, which had been heavy recently. She explained that individuals with addiction or criminal backgrounds felt the condemnation daily. She had seen comments by the public on legislators' social media outlets that it was acceptable to kill people with criminal backgrounds. She expounded that there was no recourse to tell people that it was not right to make those statements. She shared that as a leader in the community she did not make decisions based on fear. She detailed the importance of considering evidence and being open minded. She asked the committee to stay the course and relayed there were many people who were supportive of SB 91 and SB 54 who were afraid to speak out. She stressed that mass incarceration did not make communities safer. She asked if people felt safer. She emphatically answered no. She encouraged smart justice. She suggested putting a formerly incarcerated person on the commission.

Vice-Chair Gara apologized for over-the-top comments that had been made by many individuals, perhaps on many sides.

Ms. Nelson answered, "we've walked through a lot, we're not going to stop with that," but it was something to keep in mind.

[5:24:54 PM](#)

CARL BERGER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), shared information about his life in Alaska. He noted there had been a federal declaration regarding the opioid epidemic; there had also been a declaration by the state for some time. He was not very optimistic - there was much talk about doing things to help people in need, yet services had been cut back severely. It appeared that many legislators were satisfied with cutting the budget in a general way and capping the Permanent Fund. He stated that it was time to consider having a fiscal plan and to introduce new state

revenues. He relayed that he was happy to pay a tax. He spoke to issues not included in the bill. He hoped the legislature would come up with a plan.

Co-Chair Foster appreciated the remarks.

[5:29:19 PM](#)

ROBIN SMITH, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), supported passage of the bill. She was concerned about the effort to repeal SB 91. She stated that property crime had begun increasing in 2011, long before the passage of SB 91. She thought part of the frustration was likely due to the drop in the police force; the problem was being rectified under the current mayor. She pointed to a 25 percent reduction in prosecutors, resulting in delayed trials. She spoke to problems that were being rectified under the current mayor. She stressed that the opioid epidemic was making the crime problem worse. She stated that addicts were willing to be arrested, jailed, or worse, to gain access to drugs. She emphasized the need for increased access to mental health and drug treatment. She believed it was unfortunate that people were connecting the passage of SB 91 with increased crime. She believed it was like connecting vaccinations with autism. She believed SB 54 would help correct some of the problems with SB 91.

[5:31:57 PM](#)

LAURA BONNER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of SB 54. She stated that SB 91 had not caused the state's crime problem and should not be repealed. She stated that SB 54 could fix the unintended consequences of SB 91. She supported fixes regarding sexual assault and murder. She wanted to reinstitute felony jail time for felony shoplifting and theft. She believed judicial discretion should be restored. She knew that much of SB 91 had yet to be implemented. She emphasized that communities were having trouble funding law enforcement due to cuts. She believed new revenue would be required to keep Alaskans safe.

[5:34:20 PM](#)

DONALD MCLEAN, SELF, MAT-SU (via teleconference), shared that he was a practicing dentist in Mat-Su. He had seen numerous changes in the community including an increase in

crime. He was not claiming that the passage of SB 91 had increased crime; however, the community rated the highest in crime. He stated that many people were found to be committing crimes who were minimally punished, which he did not believe was acceptable. He shared a story about an employee being physically accosted the previous week outside the dental office. He believed the reason the crimes were being committed was related to the procurement of drugs - but that was not a reason to not punish people for crimes. He believed that minimally the state should look at drug testing people on welfare. He understood that did not sound right, but he thought people were getting a vacation at the state's expense. He emphasized the seriousness of the issues. He stated that Alaska had become a haven for criminals.

[5:37:45 PM](#)

STEVE ST. CLAIR, SELF, MAT-SU (via teleconference), testified against SB 54. He believed the bill was opposed at a three to one ratio. He observed that most individuals in support of the bill had a financial interest in its passage. He opined that SB 54 and SB 91 had nothing to do with public safety and everything to do with saving money. He stressed that public safety needed to be the number one priority. He stated that the bill's intent was contrary to the goal of SB 91. He did not believe the two bills could coexist. He spoke about the goal of emptying prisons to reduce costs. He stated that testimony by the Juneau Reentry Coalition there were no success stories or graduates. He stated that the bill was a miniscule step in fixing problems with SB 91. He wanted to see SB 91 repealed.

[5:40:21 PM](#)

ABBY ST. CLAIR, SELF, MAT-SU (via teleconference), spoke against SB 54. She stressed that something had to be done to improve public safety. She underscored that many Alaskans feared for their lives when gardening and grocery shopping. She stated it should not be the norm to carry [a gun], but it had become the reality for many. She understood that an increase in crime was not caused by SB 91. She believed SB 91 had been created to reduce costs and prison populations, not to increase public safety. She stated that SB 91 had addressed some important issues (community programs, treatment, and victim services), but

it had taken punishment away and let criminals walk. She believed much of the problem stemmed from budget cuts, resulting in a lack in law enforcement. She recommended putting more money into law enforcement. She urged the committee to put residents' safety number one and to repeal SB 91.

[5:42:35 PM](#)

TROY JARVIS, ALASKA AUTO DEALERS ASSOCIATION, LITHIA AUTOMOTIVE, ALASKA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), supported the legislation. He stressed that dealership break ins and auto thefts had quadrupled in the past year. He stressed that his stores had been broken into 10 to 15 times in the past two years. He shared that police officers were not taking action because they did not feel empowered to make a difference. Officers took time to arrest people who ended up back on the streets the next day, committing the same crimes. Police needed the resource of jail time to get people off the streets. He stressed the costs he had put into the dealerships related to security. He supported using jail time as a resource to get people off the streets who were committing crimes. He agreed the individuals addicted to drugs needed treatment. He supported adding more detectives to investigate crimes - the current detectives were consumed with looking into murders and other more severe crimes. He agreed with the bill.

[5:47:53 PM](#)

LYNETTE CLARK, SELF, FOX (via teleconference), supported the repeal of SB 91. She believed SB 54 and the bones of SB 91 should be taken back to other committees. She supported adjourning special session and holding hearings in communities on the bill. She believed that the community needed to speak face-to-face with law enforcement. She thought the two bills could be incorporated. She believed some of the things in SB 54 could be done away with. She was tired of giving testimony and being ignored.

[5:49:44 PM](#)

RAINA COSTELLO, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in support of SB 54 and SB 91. She shared that five years earlier she had been labeled as an addict who could not be rehabilitated. She had now been clean and sober for close to five years. Her success was due to

treatment and support through treatment. She underscored that she was a productive member of the community and represented a success story. She believed people would be lost if something was not done - they needed to get the help they needed. She did not believe the bill was perfect, but nothing began perfect. She believed it needed time to work. She understood that crime was on the rise, but she stressed the importance of addressing the drug epidemic. She had been to jail and shared that going to jail had never done anything for her but introduce her to drug dealers and other negative aspects. She shared information about her personal success story after getting clean. She believed SB 91 needed more time and some adjustments.

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CHRISTINE FUREY, SELF, KETCHIKAN, testified in support of the bill. She was a recovering addict and had been an addict from the age of 13 to 27. She shared that she had been homeless with two small children. She shared her personal story about addiction. She had realized she had to make a change. She had not had the support some others had, but she had learned to be strong. She stressed that addiction was ugly, but recovery was possible. She underscored the strength of individuals who had succeeded over addiction. She did not support doing away with SB 91. She supported making the fixes in SB 54.

Representative Guttenberg thanked the testifier.

[5:57:37 PM](#)

DENNI R. STARR, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in favor of the bill. She shared her personal story about her time in jail. She had done education and treatment. She did treatment on her own and one treatment that had been required. She had gained confidence from the program and had gained support from others. She stated that drugs would always be available. She had been full of despair at the start of her prison time. She had allowed herself to change and to discover who she was. SB 91 had granted her parole. She stated that positivity made her want to do better. She spoke to her support at Haven House. She saw herself as a success story. She worked for the Department of Corrections. She stressed that SB 91 worked. She stated that encouraging others went a long way. She underscored that it was possible to be a success.

[6:01:47 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster recognized Representative Ivy Sponholz in the room.

[6:02:03 PM](#)

CHARLES HIGH, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in support of the bill. He shared his personal story about abuse, time in prison, and drug abuse. He stressed that SB 91 had helped him seek treatment and for the first time in his life he had worked to be a part of the community. He shared information about suicide attempts in the past year. He did not support people not receiving consequences for their behavior. He was now a father. He stated that the prison system was punitive and had been for a long time. He supported SB 54 and maintaining money for treatment programs. He stated that crime rates and problems with addiction would continue to rise if treatment was not provided. He provided more detail about his personal life.

[6:05:23 PM](#)

Representative Grenn thanked Mr. High for his testimony. He asked if Mr. High had been incarcerated in Alaska. Mr. High answered in the affirmative.

Representative Grenn asked if Mr. High believed the prison system was too soft in Alaska. Mr. High replied a couple of his best friends were correctional officers. He stressed the prison system was an environment where people were not learning and were feeding on negativity. He asked for clarity on the question.

Representative Grenn rephrased his question and asked if it was too comfortable.

Mr. High answered in the negative. He stated that it had been comfortable in the early 1990s, but it was not any longer. He stressed that prison was not a fun environment. He stated there was no positive influence. People were miserable. Some of the happiest people he had seen in prison were there for life with no opportunity for parole.

[6:07:37 PM](#)

CHARLES MCKEE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified against SB 54 and SB 91. He referenced past events in Washington, D.C. dating back to 1933. He stated that all crimes were commercial and there were people in the system who were blaming the system. He shared his personal story with a property claim against him. He had feared for his life; therefore, he had plead no contest. He stressed that people were dying in incarceration. He discussed the definition of person in Alaska. He spoke of white collar crime.

[6:11:33 PM](#)

DOUG WHITE, SELF/ACCESS ALASKA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in strong support of SB 54. He had spent 10 years as a social worker in Alaska. He had provided mental health and substance abuse treatment for over 10 years on contract. He provided additional background information. He indicated addiction was an illness rather than a crime. He did not believe enough time had passed since the passage of SB 91. He urged the legislature to do further research on justice reform. He thanked the committee for its time.

[6:14:36 PM](#)

TARA RICH, ACLU OF ALASKA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of SB 54. She stressed that criminal justice reform had passed at a time when an opioid crisis was exploding in the state. Additionally, the state was experiencing the worst economic recession in many decades. She believed the combined issues had driven increases or the perception of increases in theft crimes. She argued adequate public safety funding, law enforcement for rural areas, and fully funding treatment systems. She stated that SB 91 had been designed to reduce crime and increase public safety, while safely making overdue changes to the broken criminal justice system. She underscored that building more prisons did not reduce crime. She encouraged the swift passage of SB 54 and appropriate funding levels for public safety.

Co-Chair Foster supplied the call-in number.

[6:18:38 PM](#)

JOE SCHLANGER, SELF, MAT-SU (via teleconference), discussed the lack of troopers in the Mat-Su Valley. He wondered when the region would get more troopers to handle the crime problem. He wondered if anyone had contemplated a boot camp for 18 to 25-year-olds. He believed it would teach discipline and could include a work program and addiction treatment. He suggested instead of doing a year or two in prison a person could do six months in a boot camp. He supported a transitional program for individuals leaving prison.

Co-Chair Foster relayed that the question would be passed along to the commissioner of Department of Public Safety (DPS) and he asked the testifier to contact his office.

Vice-Chair Gara relayed that DPS Commissioner Walt Monegan had testified about the importance of providing a more competitive salary for troopers. There was currently a legislative debate on whether to reinstate the pension system to keep troopers.

Co-Chair Foster pointed to the existence of the Alaska Military Youth Academy in Southcentral Alaska.

[6:21:42 PM](#)

SAMANTHA ABERNATHY, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. She had been a substance addiction treatment provider for many years. She spoke in support of treatment programs. She spoke to benefits of SB 91, including the option of a vehicle ignition device and treatment for individuals with felony DUIs who were now working and contributing to the community. She believed that SB 91 had come out and services had not been available. She stated that things were moving in that direction now. She relayed that Juneau was lacking in emergency services; the services were needed to help people get help with addiction. She believed it would dramatically help with property crimes, which she thought were a result of addiction.

[6:24:46 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster provided the House Finance Committee email address for testifiers. He provided the call-in number.

JOHNNY MURDOCK, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), believed SB 91 had been formed with good intent, but he believed law enforcement, victims rights, and prosecutors had been excluded from the process. He referenced a letter to Senator John Coghill from a Juneau law office stating that SB 91 was the most liberal, pro-criminal bill in all 50 states. He remarked there was currently a disaster as a result of the bill. He stressed that treatment services (rehabilitation and mental health services) had been underfunded in Alaska for 25 years. He hoped they would be funded and implemented. He did not support the reclassifying of felonies and misdemeanors. He thought it was ludicrous. He agreed with providing treatment, rehab, and mental health services; however, he did not support discounting criminals. He stated that thousands of victims were being shafted by the state. He specified that troopers in Anchorage were faced with picking and choosing the crimes to respond to. He gave the legislature an "F" grade.

[6:29:42 PM](#)

BILLY CHARLES, SELF, EMMONAK (via teleconference), testified in support of SB 54 and SB 91. He shared information about his professional background. He believed a reform was needed that had not occurred for a long time. He saw prisoners transported from his community to the hub community. He spoke to the high cost of transporting prisoners. He stated there was an opportunity to build a support system inside communities for people coming out of jail. He explained that research showed treatment worked. He believed reform had been a long time coming.

[6:32:35 PM](#)

CASEY DENADELL, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in support of SB 54 and SB 91. She shared that she is a wife, mother of four, and a property owner. She agreed there was an opioid crisis, which was also a public health crisis. She believed there was a certain amount of jail time people should be doing, but it was not something the state should be throwing people in prison for. She reiterated that it was a public health crisis. She detailed that she was a person in long-term recovery. She stressed that without SB 91 there would be many more people dying. She spoke to the need for more money for treatment programs and support systems for individuals leaving prison. She stated that treatment services had unfortunately been cut

from SB 91. She thanked the committee for its time. She stated that property owners appreciated it.

[6:35:30 PM](#)

TALIA EAMES, COORDINATOR, CENTRAL COUNCIL TLINGIT AND HAIDA INDIAN TRIBES OF ALASKA, JUNEAU, testified as a 10-year Air Force veteran. She mentioned success stories she had collected over the years. She supported SB 91. She stressed that for too long the state had tried to use incarceration as a solution. She shared that the reentry program in Juneau had been forced to close its doors recently due to a lack in grant funding. She stressed that the measures of SB 91 were backed by research. She challenged the committee - she had heard much misinformation during testimony - to explain the bills to their constituents. She stressed that it was unfair to blame the bills for crime that had begun long before the passage of SB 91. She underscored the need for expanded treatment options. She did not have a monetary interest in the bill. She stated that the individuals supporting the bills did it because they cared about the people in the community. She asked the legislature to stay true to the intent of SB 91 and to refrain from making changes that were not based on evidence.

[6:39:23 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara agreed that she had a right to be offended by the comment and based on her background she could be making more money.

[6:39:57 PM](#)

LINDSAY TERRY, SELF, JUNEAU, shared personal information. He shared that he had been raised by an abusive person who had taught him that being a man included being violent. He was a success story. He had been in and out of prison since the age of 14. During his last stint in prison he had been given an option of treatment and early parole. He had participated in a long and intensive treatment program. He had learned much about himself and had come out of prison to a supportive family. He was now a foreman of the company he worked for and was a father. He was taking his daughter to Disney World in a week. He was extremely grateful he had the opportunity to participate in a treatment program.

[6:42:46 PM](#)

HALEY HIGH, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in support of the bill. She shared her personal story with drug use and incarceration. She had been provided an opportunity for treatment. She knew that many people had not been so fortunate due to a lack in state programs for treatment. She had tried to get into inpatient treatment for at least five months. She was a face of why recovery worked. There were many ways that people would say their lives were screwed up by SB 91. She encouraged the committee to give the bill the time it needed to work. She encouraged promoting positive change.

[6:45:10 PM](#)

JEANNE GERHARDT-CYRUS, SELF, KIANA (via teleconference), supported SB 91 and did not want to throw it out. She stated that change was not easy or quick. She considered what the goal should be. She believed the bill was a step to making progress. She thanked the individuals who had achieved sobriety and freedom from addiction. She discussed that jails housed many people who were mental health beneficiaries - people with FAS, individuals who experienced trauma, brain injuries, and other disabilities. She emphasized that punishing people for having a disability did not help. She spoke for the need for treatment services, employment, food, and other. She believed that providing benefits would help people to be successful and would help the next generation become productive members of society. She shared a personal story of a person who had been in and out of jail for 10 years. She stressed the need for access to treatment and support. She worked with a youth group and saw youth at a young age who were excluded from opportunities. She wanted people to have opportunity.

[6:50:27 PM](#)

JANET MCCABE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. She detailed that when SB 91 had passed in 2016, the legislature had committed to a bill to correct problems that had been identified. She spoke to evidence-based information SB 91 had been based on. She supported amending the bill with SB 54. She did not want the state to throw the baby out with the bathwater. She believed the bill would help fix issues with the SB 91 and would save costs. She believed the fixes in SB 54 would mean Alaska could continue to hold people accountable for

their crimes, reduce unnecessary incarceration, and save costs. She acknowledged that future amendments may be needed, which was not uncommon. She shared that the bill had a way to go to see its impact. She specified that Texas had adopted the same approach and had seen reduction in crime and cost. She stated it was best to be smart on crime, not merely tough on crime.

[6:52:56 PM](#)

NELLY PEREZ, SELF/ALASKA NATIVE JUSTICE CENTER, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of SB 91. She was evidence that it was possible to change. She was a successful citizen in the community. She worked with individuals leaving the criminal justice system who had nothing to return to. She believed solutions to the problem were needed. She discussed a lack of housing for individuals leaving prison. She wanted to see the community working together. She wanted to ensure the community became one. She did not want the community to be divided. She believed that treatment worked and giving people a chance to succeed and change worked. She agreed that incarceration worked to some extent, but long sentences did not.

[6:55:30 PM](#)

MARY GEDDES, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the legislation. She remarked that crime rates fluctuated, but the recidivism rate was extremely high at two-thirds. She stressed it was about time for Alaskans to look at what had worked elsewhere to reduce crime. She stated that the legislature had given corrections and law enforcement direction. She stressed the importance of giving time for the agencies to do their job and to allow the bill to work. She emphasized the need for treatment and law enforcement funding. She implored the committee to fix SB 91 with SB 54 and to provide funding. She stated that public safety required programs as well as police and prosecution. She had provided written testimony as well.

[6:58:50 PM](#)

DEVON URQUHART, ANCHORAGE REENTRY COALITION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. She was a program coordinator. She explained that when there was a problem - she connected community partners. She discussed

the challenge. She did not support discussion about the repeal of SB 91. She stressed the reform efforts needed to connect individuals with their families, increasing partnerships, connecting returning citizens to jobs, with housing, and to become productive members of society. She stressed the importance of increased access to treatment services. She supported pretrial services funding. She wanted to continue to help returning citizens find housing and be connected.

7:01:29 PM

MICHAEL POWELL, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He found the misinformation about the bills upsetting. He was doing his best to figure out what was going on with Alaska's current crime rates. He spoke about the state's current recession. He pointed out that North Dakota had been experiencing a similar crime rate. He shared that Texas had experienced the opposite. He believed there was too much evidence that SB 91 had nothing to do with the increased crime rate and could in fact reduce crime if allowed to work over time. He noted that law enforcement and prosecutors were too few in the state.

7:04:53 PM

MICHAEL ALBERTSON, SELF, NORTH POLE (via teleconference), spoke in strong support of SB 91. He supported SB 54 that fixed some items he believed needed to be fixed; he believed it also pertained to conditions of release and alcoholism. He did not believe in adding jail time on for an alcoholic having a drink was counterproductive. He believed the state's biggest problem had always been alcoholism. He elaborated that companies benefit from the sale of alcohol. He thought there should be much more oversight on the amount of alcohol being served. He believed it was necessary to redefine what was considered criminal. He was not claiming there should be no repercussions for behavior. He pointed out that Wells Fargo had defrauded millions of customers, but he did not believe the company had served any jail time. He remarked there had been a couple of legislators who had done illegal things and had not served time. He suggested involving some criminals when considering like legislation. He testified in support of funding for treatment.

7:09:41 PM

Co-Chair Foster acknowledged Representative Justin Parish in the room. He provided the email address and call in numbers.

7:10:50 PM

VICKI WALLNER, STOP VALLEY THIEVES, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke against the bill. She shared that she had been in recovery for 27 years and had been a victim advocate since 2013 when she had started Stop Valley Thieves. She provided detail about her personal experience. She believed the system had been and was broken. She thought SB 91 had worsened the problem due to the way it had been implemented and many of the changes it made. She stressed that she had studied SB 91 thoroughly and had testified at almost every opportunity. She referred to studies from the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission and stressed there was a huge disconnect between the studies and the state's reality. She discussed that Alaska had a unified prison system. She did not believe it was possible to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse. She stated that lack of incarceration had emboldened prisoners. She remarked that other states had done criminal reform, but they had put treatment first. She stressed that Alaska had not done that. She was not against treatment, but she believed SB 91 was far too broken to fix with SB 54.

7:17:02 PM

Co-Chair Foster shared the House Finance Committee email address.

7:17:29 PM

MICHAEL STARR, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in support of the bill. He was against the repeal of SB 91. He stressed the time it took for law to go into effect; it had only been a little over a year. He was evidence of SB 91 helping people. He was about to plead guilty to his fifth felony and he was 26 years of age. He discussed the doors SB 91 had opened with probation officers. Avenues had opened to him that had not been available in the past. He would be behind bars without another option if it were not for SB 91. He was a part of the therapeutic court program. He did not want the bill to go away without being allowed to go into effect.

7:20:01 PM

KAREN JENKINS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), shared that she is a property owner and worked for DOC Hiland Mountain Correctional Center as an education coordinator. She was speaking on behalf of herself. Since the passage of SB 91 she had experienced lower DED completion rates and the inability to fulfill vocational education classes due to the length of stay. There was currently no treatment at the facility, but if there was, there would still be an issue of women unable to complete a six-month or 30-day program due to their length of stay. She had witnessed vocational programs being cut. She mentioned that an Anchorage needles/syringe program went through 50,000 to 60,000 needles per month. She stressed that heroin and gang issues were on the rise. She underscored the need to increase safety in communities and provide programs in and outside correctional facilities.

7:22:24 PM

Co-Chair Foster provided the call-in number to testify. He recognized Representative David Eastman in the audience.

7:22:59 PM

NICHOLE GILLER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), believed SB 91 could be a good thing, but she believed it needed to be adjusted. She shared her personal incarceration story and her success. She had been sentenced to 15 years for armed robbery. She had felt her life had been over, but individuals had supported her at Hiland Correctional Center. She was not in support of mass incarceration; however, she believed there should be a consequence to pay if a crime was committed. She shared that her home had recently been broken into, but there was nothing the police could do. She believed whoever had broken in was struggling with addiction and were unable to get help. She stressed that the catch and release jail system did not give enough time to help anyone. She had taken advantage of the education program while in prison. She was successful in the construction field at present. She was a recovering addict. She stressed the importance of treatment. She thought the intent of SB 91 had been to focus on rehabilitation versus mass incarceration, but she did not see that actually happening. She stressed that the

good programs responsible for helping people were being cut.

[7:26:27 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara recommended contacting law enforcement about someone breaking into her house. He stated it was a jailable offence for a first time offender.

[7:27:11 PM](#)

SARAH JO THEIS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. She shared her personal story with incarceration in Texas. She had never been confronted by staff and her peers about her actions until she was incarcerated in Hiland Mountain Correctional Center and entered the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program. She noted the transformation she had experienced in the program had been intense. She had gained tools she needed and had gone to a treatment program when released from jail. She had been able to become a person she never imagined herself to be. She reminded everyone that the women were daughters, mothers, and sisters. She had recently been invited to Hiland for the second year in a row and had observed large gaps in the health needed in the facility. She shared that she would love to continue being a voice for women at the facility.

[7:30:17 PM](#)

LEE BREINIG, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of the bill. He shared his personal story with recovery. He had made mistakes in his past and had to pay the price for them. He had to fight hard every day to move forward. He pointed to Portugal that in the past had the highest rate of overdose. The country had changed things around and had provided treatment. He knew that treatment worked. He had graduated from college and was now serving on the statewide council for drug abuse. He stated the issue was multifaceted; crime rates had been rising in Alaska for decades. He worked at a nonprofit serving mental health beneficiaries. He stressed that addiction was not a crime, it was a mental health disorder. He did not support to continue locking people up for having a brain disorder.

[7:33:47 PM](#)

BRUCE SCHULTE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), stated that SB 91 intended to direct tax revenue from the legal marijuana industry to treatment programs. He thought it was a part of the bill that was not well known. He urged the legislature to track the money coming in and ensure it was put to good use. He believed it was a suitable use for the funds. He stated that SB 91 was not all bad; however, Anchorage was currently under siege. He had previously lived in Los Angeles and had never had as many friends armed as he did in Anchorage. He continued that the average citizen was feeling beleaguered - some of the problem was due to drug addiction and part of it was due to people looking to make easy money. He asked the legislature not to forget the average citizen who would like there to be some applicable laws when they were victimized.

[7:36:57 PM](#)

MATT STEELE, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke against SB 91. He spoke about theft in the area. He believed most of the testimony had been from offenders or individuals involved with the employment of rehabilitating offenders. He spoke about theft in the area. He shared personal experiences related to theft from his mailbox. He had empathy for individuals addicted to drugs, but things were getting worse and he was just a law-abiding citizen trying to live his life. He stated that the legislature was not looking out for law abiding citizens. He supported repealing the legislation.

[7:38:42 PM](#)

DAVID NEES, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), was unsupportive of SB 54 due to a number of flaws. He believed pretrial diversions for first-time offenders needed to be included. Statistics showed that first time offenders generally had a first and last contact with the justice system and it was their record afterwards that put up barriers if the person was convicted. He stated that being entered into the system prevented convicted felons from entering a number of occupations in Alaska. The bill had no lowering of the barriers. He stated that the bill did not deal with people with substance and alcohol problems - he believed there needed to be a diversion for the issue related to mental health. He believed Alaska's correctional facilities operated as the biggest mental hospitals in the state. He highlighted that Anchorage had half of the

population but did not have half of the state's prosecutors. He spoke about the resulting bottle neck in cases. He stated that the people of Anchorage were begging the legislature to do something.

[7:42:12 PM](#)

NICOLE MCCABE, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), spoke in support of SB 91. She relayed she had been in recovery for 10 years. She was a parent, a grandparent, and foster parent. When she had been an active addict there had not been resources to get the help she needed. She had left the state to find better resources and treatment to get better. She had been speaking to her children about the current crisis. She stated that a lack of resources was putting people where they were. She provided a comparison and discussed the need to have time to work out the glitches in the bill. She believed it was currently the information gathering stage to determine what was working and what was not. She believed taking SB 91 away would hurt the community and the state. She supported treatment and counseling services.

[7:45:39 PM](#)

CATHY BERBANSKE, SELF, HAINES (via teleconference), supported SB 91 and believed time needed to be provided for the bill to work. She shared that she is the mother of several addicts. She spoke to the need for accessible treatment. She supported treatment services in urban and rural areas. She did not believe putting addicts back in jail did anyone any good. She realized more work was needed on SB 91, but she would hate to see it eliminated.

[7:48:08 PM](#)

STEVEN WRIGHT, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke against the bill. He relayed he was running for lieutenant governor. He was concerned about the crime rate that had increased significantly. He stated that the bill caused significant concern for individuals throughout the state. He believed legislators were not listening to their constituents. He believed there was a mismanagement problem when it came to providing the services. He stated that allowing the things to happen restricted the rights of the people. He stated that a full repeal of SB 91 would be a start. He remarked that people had felt much safer a few

years back. He believed SB 54 was a watered-down version of SB 91.

7:51:52 PM

SHERRY MILLER, SELF, EAGLE RIVER (via teleconference), testified against SB 91 and SB 54. She spoke on behalf of her daughter Linda Bauer who had been murdered prior to the passage of SB 91. She stated that her daughter's murderer fell into the SB 91 and SB 54 structure. She referred to Section 27 related to new parole provisions - she explained the provision was confusing. She believed there needed to be a clearer definition. She shared that the murderer had been convicted in a previous state for assaulting a police officer responding to a domestic violence call. She did not support Section 34 related to being denied parole the first time - the individual could consider parole every two years. She believed the length of time needed to be longer; victim's families should be able to rest. She stressed that the individual was not interested in being rehabilitated and was a master manipulator. Section 37 pertained to parole and parolees not being able to consume alcohol or have a deadly weapon. She thought a stronger definition was needed because her daughter's killer had strangled her with his bare hands. She wondered how he would be kept from his own hands. She believed the legislature was allowing violent criminals to walk the streets.

Vice-Chair Gara expressed his sorrow for Ms. Miller's loss. He shared that he had lost his father when he was young. He did not want to try to change her mind about the provisions she had listed. He relayed that SB 91 had increased the mandatory minimum sentence for murder. He spoke to the parole provision. He explained that an individual would not be eligible for parole for at least the length of the mandatory minimum sentence, which was 20 or 30 years under SB 91. The first time a person could ask for parole was 20 to 30 years if they were sentenced under SB 91. He hoped Ms. Miller did not have to face the individual for a very long time.

Ms. Miller answered that her family had been told that because the person was serving time waiting for his sentence - the family had been told the individual could face parole in as early as 14 years if convicted under the second degree [murder] charge. She stressed that it was ridiculous. She specified that her daughter had been 19,

which did not even add up to how many years she had been alive.

7:57:40 PM

Co-Chair Foster provided the call-in number and email address for House Finance.

DAMITA DUPLANTIS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified against the bill. She supported the repeal of SB 91 and believed SB 54 was merely a band aid. She stated that until treatment facilities were in place she believed the best place for criminals to be was in jail. She shared that she had family members who were addicts and those in recovery. She stated that her uncle's treatment had not been funded by the state. She believed there were ways for people to get help if they wanted it. She stated that many drug addicts were living in uninhabitable conditions so she believed it was not an excuse to say that prisons were overcrowded and could not take more people. She thought four to ten people could be put in a room in prison. She had spoken with police officers at community events and believed most of the officers were in opposition to SB 91.

8:02:35 PM

DEANA CRESAP, SELF, CHUGIAK (via teleconference), spoke in support of a repeal of SB 91. She did not support SB 54. She wanted to see people held accountable for their crimes. She shared that she had been robbed. She referred to an individual who had continued to commit crimes and had 34 arrests. She stressed the need to get the individuals off the street and for consequences for action.

8:04:49 PM

STEPHEN DUPLANTIS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against the bill. He shared that he is a pastor. The church had found syringes in its parking lot and vehicle tires had been slit. He felt it was sad to need to install more security cameras. He stressed that an addict had to want to get help. He emphasized that it was not possible to force help on someone. He stated that the church paid back into the community and had to rely solely on people giving. He stated that many people supporting SB 54 viewed it as a fix to SB 91, which to him meant that the original bill was

broken. He spoke to his personal experience. He believed something was wrong.

8:08:50 PM

RON CROWL, SELF, EAGLE RIVER (via teleconference), spoke against SB 91. He believed it had allowed crime to increase in Alaska. He wanted criminals to do time for their crimes and did not want them to be given a free pass. He wanted to see SB 91 repealed. He wanted to see SB 54 provide more resources for incarcerated individuals to receive treatment prior to release. He supported getting security under control.

8:10:51 PM

RICHARD BUSK, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), stated that SB 91 limited actions that could be taken by the security agency he worked for. He agreed with the need to guarantee treatment in prison. He reasoned that most of treatment outside prison was by choice. He relayed it was common in his work to see repeat offenders. He reported that thefts had doubled in the past year. He understood that a justice system aimed to reduce recidivism by shifting towards probation and treatment, but everyone had to be on board to make decisions together. He noted that cost was the largest concern for everyone at the state. He communicated that there were thefts and shootings in Anchorage almost daily. He shared that many of the crimes were crimes of opportunity where the public left their doors unlocked. He spoke for the need for services. Additionally, citizens deserved protection from individuals who could not control their decisions.

8:14:40 PM

CHRIS MCLAIN, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He shared that worked as an entry coalition coordinator and had been a magistrate judge for close to nine years. He reported that Fairbanks was beginning to see a positive change concerning reentry. He served on multiple coalitions including the Housing and Homeless Coalition. He considered SB 54 and SB 91 to be the largest steps the state was taking to rehabilitate and change the system for the better. He contemplated how to make reentry into society successful. He highlighted components involved in reentry including housing,

transportation, employment, and other. He believed it was necessary to give the bills more time for change to occur.

[8:18:00 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster shared the call-in number for individuals in Fairbanks.

CHRIS EICHENLAUB, SELF, EAGLE RIVER (via teleconference), testified against SB 54 and SB 91. He believed the legislature had failed the state. He believed SB 91 was horrendous and supported its repeal. He stressed that the current emergency situation required immediate action, not band aids. He thought DOC needed to do a better job. He underscored the need to get drugs out of jails.

Co-Chair Foster asked testifiers to refrain from calling individuals names.

[8:20:51 PM](#)

DEBORAH MCINTYRE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified strongly against the bills. She shared her personal experience with addiction. She stressed that Alcoholics Anonymous had saved her life. She underscored that drug treatment should be available for individuals serving time. She lived in a crime infested area and wanted crime to be addressed. She stated that the victims had become the losers. She provided a story. She had hopes for everyone, but she did not support enabling bad behavior. She spoke about the difficulty of reintegration after serving jail time. She asked the committee to tighten up state laws. She needed a safer home for her elderly parents. She understood the opioid problem, but she believed an individual had to want help to get it.

[8:26:24 PM](#)

NORIA CLARK, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified against the bill. She stated there was data behind how SB 91 would not work. She addressed the number of people who had died at the hands of drug abusers or felons. She asked where the data was. She wanted to know why those innocent lives were not accounted for. She believed the legislature's failures Alaska was in a state of emergency. She stated it was an epidemic that was not just drug induced. She was offended that legislators were

being paid a certain amount in per diem, while the public had to wait online for lengthy periods to testify. She shared that she would be very upset if an income tax was implemented. She addressed sex offender probation. She expressed strong distaste for law that she believed failed to protect children from sexual abuse. She disagreed with a statement made by a committee member that breaking into a home was a jailable offence. She stated the crime was not currently a Class C felony.

8:31:18 PM

MARY ALICE MCKEEN, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. She shared that she had been an Alaskan since 1978. She thanked the committee for its time. She urged the committee not to repeal SB 91 that was the result of significant careful work. She believed the increase in crime was due to the opioid epidemic and it was unfair to blame the increase in crime on SB 91. She reasoned that other states were experiencing the same type of increase in crime and they did not have SB 91. She believed the bill needed to be given time to work. She supported the increase in funds for treatment. She was in support of SB 54 that provided fixes. She detailed that SB 54 would give judges more discretion in sentencing first time Class C felony offenders and Class A misdemeanors and it made up to the fourth degree a jailable offence. She thought the changes should help alleviate some of the problems people had talked about. She shared that she is on the board of Haven House, but she was speaking for herself. She shared that Haven House provided treatment to individuals leaving prison. She stressed the importance of structured support of housing to keep people out of prison. She explained that peer supported recovery residences helped people to learn a new life away from crime.

8:34:39 PM

MICHAEL SHELDON, SELF, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke against SB 54 and was supportive of repealing SB 91. He wondered how officers could protect citizens if the law did not protect citizens. He believed individuals who commit crimes should serve the sentence fitting their crime. He supported investing in state troopers and local police. He believed police should have the ability to arrest people and put them in jail to serve time as needed. He stated that under current law a person could shoot at a

house and be back on the street again. He opined that repealing SB 91 was essential. He thought SB 54 was only a band aid.

[8:38:07 PM](#)

TYSON BUNDY, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified against SB 91. He believed it was a catch and release program. He agreed that criminals needed to be treated with dignity, but they needed to have accountability. He believed the state should be doing things to protect the rights of its citizens. He believed SB 91 needed to be repealed. He did not believe SB 54 went far enough to fix the problems.

[8:40:00 PM](#)

GEORGIA KUSTURA, SELF, CHUGIAK (via teleconference), testified against the bill. She shared that she had worked for the Department of Law for over 20 years. She believed people needed to be held accountable for their behavior. She did not support enabling people. She believed many people would opt for using drugs again. She detailed that in the past year every house on her block had been the target of attempted burglary. Many individuals in the neighborhood had paid to install security systems. She stressed that property crime was a gateway crime. She underscored that the laws were depriving citizens of their safety. She stressed that people had to be accountable and the bill was only enabling criminals. She asked for a repeal of SB 91.

[8:42:33 PM](#)

KIT ROBERTS, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke against SB 91 and 54. He shared that he had been robbed three times recently (out of his vehicle and from a construction site). He believed the bills were only funding post crime issues. He had yet to hear anything about precrime education, which was where the solution would come from. He had been taught how to behave through 4-H and church programs. He believed the bills only helped post crime issues after damage had been done. He worked hard for his belongings and items had been stolen by individuals who had not been taught that stealing was wrong. He believed SB 54 was a hinderance to troopers and prosecution.

8:46:20 PM

CHLOE ABBOTT, SELF, JUNEAU, shared that she worked with Haven House. She shared her story of how SB 91 had impacted her life. She had been charged with a DUI in 2015 and had struggled with alcoholism for 30 years. She detailed that it was not something she wanted to do. She stressed that individuals wanted an opportunity in life to change. She stated that she would have been in jail for 230 days and would have had no opportunity for treatment. She had received treatment and was a mother of a nine-year-old boy. She shared that she now had a good job as an accountant and was productive. She was an active member of her church and had received treatment she needed. She had been given the option of treatment and she had to take it. She implored the committee to maintain the bills and to increase funding for treatment. She thanked the committee.

Vice-Chair Gara thanked Ms. Abbott for testifying. He relayed that there would be a battle about whether to provide more funding for treatment later in the session. He encouraged Ms. Abbott to follow the process and testify.

Ms. Abbott replied that she would follow the issue. She relayed that even though she had a criminal background, she had a voice. She thanked the committee for listening.

Representative Wilson congratulated Ms. Abbott and thanked her for her courage to testify.

8:51:12 PM

ANTONIO PRESCOTT, SELF, JUNEAU, shared his personal story. He had gone to jail and had served his time. He believed the bill helped many people who had been incarcerated and were looking to change. He had served eight years in prison and now had an excellent job. He had taken the opportunity to change his life. He had done around 60 programs while in jail and had seized the opportunity. He was making his mark in the community by stepping up and doing the right thing. He believed the bill could allow people to step up and help themselves.

Representative Grenn asked for examples of programs Mr. Prescott had accessed in prison.

Mr. Prescott answered that he had done a construction program and he had been at Pt. McKenzie Correctional Farm where he had run the farming equipment, planted potatoes and had worked 17 to 18 hours per day in the summer. He had been rejuvenated due to the programs.

8:54:30 PM

NICK TURENNE, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), supported SB 54. He was sorry for all of the Alaskans impacted by crime, but he stressed that drugs and alcohol were causing the problems. He did not believe individuals who had experienced problems with drugs and alcohol should be given sentences as rigid as someone who planned to commit harm to their neighbor. He stated that the individuals could be rehabilitated in treatment and could receive education to integrate into society. He stressed that individuals were victims of substance abuse. He supported taking care of individuals with substance abuse problems. He underscored the necessity of winning the war on addiction. He did not support incarcerating people for long periods of time. He believed SB 91 needed to be improved for the better of Alaskans.

8:57:08 PM

BOB BARNDT, SELF, EAGLE RIVER (via teleconference), testified in opposition to SB 91 and SB 54. He believed it was the committee's responsibility to listen to its constituents. He had heard much testimony in opposition to the bill and to repeal SB 91. He stated that law enforcement had vocalized that the bill was not a good idea. He asked the committee to take those things into consideration when deciding on SB 54.

8:59:06 PM

MICHELLE OVERSTREET, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), testified in support of SB 54 and SB 91. She shared that she was the executive director of a drop-in center for homeless kids. She noted that numerous provisions in SB 91 would not take effect until 2018. She relayed that it had not been given time to work. She shared that the increase in drug problems had increased dramatically. She shared that 11 young people had completed treatment in her center - she believed the opportunity was due to SB 91. She spoke to an increase in peer support. She urged support for

individuals to have lives. She stressed that the state could not continue to use the correctional system as the long-term solution. She provided further details about the center treatment. There had only been four kids who had completed treatment the year prior to the passage of SB 91. She stressed the importance for patience with allowing the bill to have time to work.

[9:03:53 PM](#)

STACEY KORSMO, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against SB 54 and urged the legislature to repeal SB 91. She shared that she had been a victim of the increase in crime. Her vehicle had been stolen and when it was recovered she had been told she had to clean the drug paraphernalia and stolen goods out of her car. She detailed there had been 25 to 30 sets of car keys from other stolen vehicles in her car. She had been told by the police that their hands were tied and even if they found out who had stolen the car, likely nothing would happen to the person. She emphasized that it was a disservice to people who paid taxes for public safety. She stressed that public safety was one of the essential functions of government. She felt violated as a result of the experience. She had empathy for individuals suffering from addiction. She stated that sometimes it took consequences of individuals facing prison to turn their lives around.

[9:06:22 PM](#)

Representative Wilson asked if it was the state troopers or the Anchorage police who had Ms. Korsmo clean her car out herself.

Ms. Korsmo replied that it had been the Anchorage police.

Representative Wilson apologized and stated that no one should have to deal with that.

[9:06:53 PM](#)

BARBARA PETEK, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), shared that she worked at a liquor store near the Dimond Center. She shared that in 2015 two employees had an armed robber in the store for over two hours. She detailed the individual had been on drugs and once he left the liquor store he had gone into a nearby restaurant. She stressed

that the crime was a felony. Due to the passage of SB 91 the individual had not gone to jail and had instead been put at a half-way house. He had then gone missing from the half-way house for three days, but the half-way house had not reported it. The individual was stalking another clerk at the liquor store - it had been two years they had been dealing with the individual. Under SB 91 the individual had not been guilty and had never been to court. She stated that SB 91 had numerous problems; she did not know if it needed to be repealed. She was very upset and was afraid to go to work and ride the bus. Her life had been dramatically impacted. She stressed that the individual was not getting treatment.

[9:10:18 PM](#)

ILLODOR MERCULIEFF, SELF, SAINT PAUL ISLAND (via teleconference), supported SB 91 and SB 54. He thanked the committee for its time. He shared that he had been in and out of the criminal justice system since the age of 18. He had been involved in a vehicle crime and had used it as a life changing event to get sober. He was grateful to the Department of Corrections and Department of Law. He spoke to the importance of accountability. He addressed the importance of culture and language. He was happy to see youth in his district embracing the items. He spoke to people wanting to change. He shared that he had really wanted to change. He remarked that the bill needed to be given more time.

[9:13:51 PM](#)

SARAH EVANS, SELF, DILLINGHAM (via teleconference), testified in support of SB 91 and SB 54. She stated that the crime rates had been on the rise for many years prior to the passage of SB 91. She stated that 66 percent of individuals left in prison returned after six months to one year. She stated that the bill was a work in progress. She spoke to the importance of funding SB 91. She heard numerous people who were scared and threatened by SB 91. She relayed that SB 54 had many improvements. She hoped the committee would consider the bills as a whole. She asked the committee to look at the actual facts.

Co-Chair Foster CLOSED public testimony. He thanked the public for its testimony. He reminded committee members of the amendment deadlines.

SB 54 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Foster addressed the schedule for the following day.

#

ADJOURNMENT

9:19:16 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.