

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

April 8, 2025

3:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki, Chair
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson
Senator Robert Yundt

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Alaska Police Standards Council
Daniel Carothers - Douglas
David Ross - Kenai
Timothy Collins - Kodiak

- CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 62

"An Act relating to the board of parole; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SSSB 62 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 126

"An Act relating to correctional facilities; relating to the authority of the commissioner of corrections to designate the placement of prisoners; and requiring the Department of Corrections to estimate and report certain cost savings."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 62

SHORT TITLE: BOARD OF PAROLE: MEMBERSHIP, REPORT

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) TOBIN

01/24/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/24/25 (S) STA, L&C
02/19/25 (S) SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE INTRODUCED-REFERRALS
02/19/25 (S) STA, L&C
03/11/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/11/25 (S) Heard & Held
03/11/25 (S) MINUTE(STA)
04/08/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 126

SHORT TITLE: CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES; PLACEMENT

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) YUNDT

03/12/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/12/25 (S) STA, FIN
04/08/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

TIMOTHY COLLINS, Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as a governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

DAVID ROSS, Chief; Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as a governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

DANIEL CAROTHERS, Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Douglas, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as a governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

SENATOR LOKI TOBIN, District I
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 62.

LOUIE FLORA, Staff
Senator Loki Tobin
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered a question regarding SB 62.

CHRISTINA FHADURA, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 62.

NICOLE ZEGIESTOWSKY, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 62.

RYAN MCKEE, Staff
Senator Rob Yundt
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the sectional analysis for SB 126.

JEN WINKELMAN, Commissioner
Department of Corrections (DOC)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding SB 126.

KEVIN WORLEY, Director
Corrections
Division of Administrative Services
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered a question regarding SB 126.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:31:42 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Wielechowski, Gray-Jackson, Yundt and Chair Kawasaki.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) ALASKA POLICE STANDARDS COUNCIL

[3:32:45 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of the governor's appointees to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

[3:33:13 PM](#)

TIMOTHY COLLINS, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council, Kodiak, Alaska, testified as a governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council and stated that he has 13 years of law enforcement experience, beginning in 2012 with the Newcastle County Police in Delaware, where he served as a patrol

officer, detective, and in the special victims unit handling sensitive cases. He also served on the crisis negotiation team and as an instructor on ethics and crimes against children. In 2021, he joined the Alaska State Troopers, working in Soldotna and Emmonak before being promoted to Sergeant in 2023, now leading the Kodiak post. He said his career has provided broad experience in both urban and rural policing, and he emphasized leadership, accountability, professionalism, transparency, and ethical policing to strengthen trust with the community.

[3:35:39 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked what brought him to Alaska.

[3:35:50 PM](#)

MR. COLLINS replied that he and his wife had long dreamed of moving to Alaska. He first applied around 2011-2012 after college but couldn't afford the travel costs for testing at the time. Instead, he began a successful career with a police department in Delaware. In 2020, he revisited the idea, discussed it with his wife, and decided to apply again. He said since moving, he and his wife have had no regrets, love living in Alaska, and look forward to continuing his career in Alaska.

[3:37:01 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked if his job in Delaware had define benefits for retirement.

[3:37:26 PM](#)

MR. COLLINS replied yes, the police department had a pension program providing 50 percent at 20 years. He began there in 2012 and was vested after five years, so he will be eligible to draw retirement benefits starting at age 65.

[3:38:21 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON emphasized that Alaska doesn't have define benefits.

[3:38:58 PM](#)

DAVID ROSS, Chief; Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council, Kenai, Alaska, testified as a governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council:

[Original punctuation provided.]

My appointment is to the Alaska Police Standards Council as one of the Four Police Chief positions on the Council.

I have been at the Kenai Police Department for going on 24 years, with almost 9 years as the police chief. My entire Law enforcement career has been at the Kenai Police Department where I have filled all the roles from police officer to investigator, to Sgt, to Lieutenant, and currently the Chief. I have lived in the Kenai area for over 53 years, since 1971.

I have served on the Council for the last three years and feel like during that time that Council has performed very valuable work --- and if I didn't see great value in it, I wouldn't be back before you today.

I look forward to my role on the Council as an opportunity to continue to help address the need for a very professional and well-trained law enforcement work force in Alaska.

I am honored to be considered for the position

[3:41:03 PM](#)

DANIEL CAROTHERS, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council, Douglas, Alaska, testified as a governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council and stated that he has over 28 years of experience with the Department of Corrections, beginning as a correctional officer and later serving as an institutional and field probation officer in Bethel. He helped open and run the Yukon Kuskokwim Correctional Center in 1984, later becoming superintendent of Lemon Creek Correctional Center, a role he held for 19 years. He also served briefly as Deputy Commissioner about three years ago. He said after retiring, he operated a polygraph business for 14 years, working with sex offender counseling programs in Lemon Creek and Fairbanks, and conducting supervision-related polygraphs for probation officers. As superintendent, he developed inmate programs such as GED education and secured a grant to launch Alaska's first sex offender treatment program, which continues successfully today. He said with his experience across corrections he emphasized his understanding of the responsibilities, operations, and training needs of corrections staff, and expressed confidence in his ability to contribute effectively to the Alaska Peace Officer Standards Council if confirmed.

[3:44:41 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if Mr. Carothers would share his thoughts on the Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC).

[3:45:27 PM](#)

MR. CAROTHERS expressed respect for the commissioner's work but shared his own opinions on the Department of Corrections. He stated his belief that the DOC is performing well overall, noting that inmate populations have generally declined in recent years. He highlighted concern that the Alaska Native prison population has increased and now exceeds all other tracked groups, which he sees as an issue needing attention. While acknowledging he is not an expert on the causes, he suggested this problem is broader than what the Department of Corrections alone can resolve. He also mentioned that concerns about suicides in custody may appear worse without full context.

[3:48:01 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if Mr. Carothers would share his thoughts on probation, parole, pretrial supervision and ankle monitors.

[3:48:30 PM](#)

MR. CAROTHERS highlighted the need of other programs such as ankle monitoring, home confinement, and halfway houses/Community Residential Centers (CRCs). He opined that these programs are more beneficial for nonviolent offenders serving short sentences who have families and jobs at risk. He expressed support for expanding these programs but raised concerns about policy changes made under a past commissioner that broadened eligibility to include some medium-custody inmates. He said this policy change has occasionally resulted in higher-risk individuals being placed in the community. He stressed that accurate classification is essential to ensure these programs are used appropriately and safely.

[3:51:01 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on the governor's appointments of Daniel Carothers, David Ross and Timothy Collins; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[3:51:35 PM](#)

At ease.

[3:51:48 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[3:51:53 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved Daniel Carothers, David Ross, and Timothy Collins appointees to the Alaska Police Standards Council, be advanced to a joint session of the legislature for consideration.

She reminded members that signing the report(s) regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees; the nominations are merely advanced to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[3:52:15 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI stated that in accordance with AS 39.05.080, the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointments be advanced to a joint session for consideration:

Alaska Police Standards Council
Daniel Carothers - Douglas
David Ross - Kenai
Timothy Collins - Kodiak

[3:52:25 PM](#)

At ease.

SB 62-BOARD OF PAROLE: MEMBERSHIP, REPORT

[3:53:34 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 62 "An Act relating to the board of parole; and providing for an effective date."

[3:53:56 PM](#)

SENATOR LOKI TOBIN, District I, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 62, provided a brief recap and stated that the bill proposes reforms to Alaska's Board of Parole. SB 62 expands the number of board seats and reserves positions for individuals with specific expertise, including a tribal representative, a licensed physician, psychiatrist or psychologist, someone with drug and alcohol rehabilitation support experience, and a victim of a crime or part of a victim advocacy group. SB 62 also introduces 10-year term limits for board members, along with new reporting requirements to improve accountability and transparency. SB 62 emphasizes that parole offers incarcerated individuals hope and incentive to engage in treatment and rehabilitation. She said that with Alaska spending

about \$73,000 annually, about \$202 a day per prisoner, successful reintegration through parole and supportive services benefits both individuals and communities, making the system more effective and cost-efficient.

[3:56:25 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT asked how many seats the board currently holds and how many it would hold if SB 62 passed.

[3:56:35 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN responded that the current number of seats is five and SB 62 would expand the board to seven seats.

[3:56:55 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT asked how the current five seats are selected.

[3:57:06 PM](#)

LOUIE FLORA, Staff, Senator Loki Tobin, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, answered a question regarding SB 62 and stated that current statute requires geographical representation by judicial districts and general knowledge of the criminal justice system for Board of Parole members. The new proposal adds more specific criteria and limits how many former corrections officers may serve on the board simultaneously.

[3:57:58 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 62.

[3:58:17 PM](#)

CHRISTINA FHADURA, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 62 and stated that this bill would improve access to parole and incentivize rehabilitation and education for incarcerated individuals. She said adding board seats allows for more diverse perspectives enhancing the board's cultural responsiveness and ability to address underlying issues. SB 62 is not intended to dismantle the board but to share its workload and ensure more informed, balanced decisions about reintegration into communities.

[4:00:08 PM](#)

NICOLE ZEGIESTOWSKY, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 62 to expand and diversify the Alaska Board of Parole. She noted that about 80 percent of incarcerated Alaskans experience substance use disorders and argued that adding a board member with expertise in treatment or recovery would help the board make more informed decisions. She said this change could increase successful reentry into communities,

reduce incarceration rates, and ensure rehabilitation opportunities are meaningful. She emphasized that reintegration is essential for true recovery and endorsed updating the board's composition to better reflect the population it serves.

[CHAIR KAWASAKI closed public testimony on SB 62.]

[4:02:11 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[4:02:12 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to report SB 62, work order 34-LS0227\N, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[4:02:52 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and SSSB 62 was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

[4:03:02 PM](#)

At ease.

SB 126-CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES; PLACEMENT

[4:04:48 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 126 "An Act relating to correctional facilities; relating to the authority of the commissioner of corrections to designate the placement of prisoners; and requiring the Department of Corrections to estimate and report certain cost savings."

[4:05:45 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT sponsor of SB 126 introduced the bill, it directs the Department of Corrections (DOC) to explore two cost-cutting measures. He explained that the first measure involves consolidating facilities with high vacancy rates to reduce budget expenses. He added that the bill also authorizes the commissioner to revisit the option of housing inmates in out-of-state facilities, specifically those with seven or more years left to serve. This would involve a public process with the legislature and DOC. He emphasized that any savings from these measures should support education in Alaska, describing SB 126 as a necessary and difficult starting point for a compassionate and fiscally responsible solution.

[4:07:33 PM](#)

RYAN MCKEE, Staff, Senator Rob Yundt, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, provided the sectional analysis for SB 126:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Sectional Analysis

SB 126

Section 1 AS.33.30.061 adds new subsections to section 1.

Section (e) would grant the Commissioner the ability to investigate cost reductions by either consolidating existing facilities or designating placement of a prisoner at an out-of-state facility.

Section (f) clarifies that any prisoner that is sent out of state shall be housed exclusively apart from prisoners who are not residents of the state.

Section (g) requires the state to estimate the cost savings annually, resulting from actions taken under section (e) of this section. It also allows the legislature to appropriate an amount equal to the annual cost savings estimate for education purposes.

[4:09:25 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the Department of Corrections (DOC) has a position on SB 126.

[4:09:29 PM](#)

JEN WINKELMAN, Commissioner, Department of Corrections (DOC), Juneau, Alaska, answered questions regarding SB 126. She replied no, it is a policy decision by legislature and that Alaska law already permits sending prisoners out of state through contracts when necessary. While SB 126 adds further provisions, she emphasized that the department would carry out the legislature's direction.

[4:10:09 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked how many inmates have seven or more years remaining to serve in prison.

[4:10:34 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN answered that, as of Monday, there are 792 inmates with seven or more years remaining.

[4:10:45 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked how many of the 792 inmates are incarcerated for violent crimes.

MS. WINKLEMAN answered 778 inmates.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked which violent crimes were most committed among the 778 incarcerated.

MS. WINKELMAN replied the incarcerations were primarily for crimes against a person and sex offences.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked for the average rate of occupancy in Alaska prisons.

MS. WINKELMAN answered that 81 percent is the actual inmate to bed ratio. She stated that the operating running percentage is about 95. She explained that inmate population numbers are critical because specialized populations, such as co-defendants, victims, gang members, and different genders must be kept separate. Once a housing module fills with such inmates, beds for the general population may become unavailable. She said as a result, the facility is effectively operating at about 95 percent capacity, and she emphasized the importance of making the legislature and public aware of this operational reality.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked what factors have contributed to the recent decrease in the prison population, given that the DOC experienced overcrowding a few years ago.

[4:12:51 PM](#)

MS. WINKELMAN answered that the DOC had projections to hit capacity by 2027 and would need to build a new facility or send inmates out of state but covid happened, law changes, pre-trial services came on board and the numbers have remained stagnant. The DOC did see an influx of population at the end of 2019 after House Bill 49 passed. She said when covid hit the inmate population maintained.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked for an estimate of potential cost savings if the state were to investigate and transfer prisoners with seven or more years remaining for violent crimes to out-of-state facilities.

MS. WINKLEMAN answered that she did not have a current estimate of cost savings but noted that in 2019, before reopening Palmer

Correctional Center, the daily cost of care per inmate was just under \$100. She emphasized that additional costs- such as transportation, parole hearings, and ensuring proper separation of inmates in out-of-state facilities, would be considered.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked what the average cost per day is to house an inmate in Alaska compared to other states.

MS. WINKLEMAN answered that the cost to house an inmate in Alaska is \$202 a day.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked for the cost at a contracted out of state prison.

MS. WINKLEMAN answered that when the DOC sent inmates out of state previously the cost of care in Alaska was \$176, the out of state cost of care was a little under \$100.

[4:16:29 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked how much DOC's budget has grown in the last six years.

[4:16:56 PM](#)

KEVIN WORLEY, Director, Corrections, Division of Administrative Services, Juneau, Alaska, answered a question regarding SB 126. She replied that he didn't have an answer and would get back with the committee.

[4:17:09 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked for the wage of the highest-paid correctional officer over the past three years.

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MS. WINKLEMAN replied that she doesn't know.

[4:17:29 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON requested that follow-up information include a breakdown of salary, retirement, and other benefits to determine the total compensation.

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SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked when correctional officers' work overtime is it at the rate of 1.5 times the hourly rate or double.

[4:17:55 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN. answered currently overtime is 1.5; it was double time when DOC had a Leave of Absence (LOA) in place.

[4:18:07 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked when Alaska last housed inmates in another state.

[4:18:16 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN answered that the inmates were gradually returned to Alaska with the phased opening of Goose Creek Correctional Center between 2012 and 2014. She said the state still uses out-of-state placements for certain inmates, such as those needing specialized medical care or who cannot be safely housed in Alaska. Currently, there are maybe six prisoners held out of state, though the exact number would be confirmed.

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked which states Alaska previously contracted with to provide this service.

MS. WINKLEMAN replied that Alaska previously had contracts to house inmates in Colorado and Arizona.

[4:19:36 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI recounted the history of Goose Creek Correctional Center, which was established through legislative action and bonding to address the need to return 1,000 out-of-state inmates back to Alaska. The facility opened gradually between 2012 and 2014. While more expensive, the goals were to house inmates in-state and keep them closer to their families. He asked for clarification about the six out-of-state inmates, including whether the inmates are there for medical or other reasons. He also asked about the types of out of state facilities used (private or publicly funded), the frequency of sending inmates out of state, and whether Alaska ever receives inmates from other states.

[4:21:12 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN replied that transferring inmates in and out of state is easy to do because of an interstate compact where Alaska works with other states. She stated her belief that the facilities are all public.

[4:21:43 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI stated that the committee wants to study more about the costs of out-of-state housing.

[4:22:05 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT asked if there are facilities currently used to house inmates not owned by the state and possibly leased from another community.

[4:22:22 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN answered that west side of the Anchorage facility is owned by DOC, the east side of the Anchorage facility is owned by the municipality of Anchorage. She said all other facilities are owned by the state.

[4:22:56 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT requested a list of deferred maintenance issues for each facility, whether state-owned or leased, and clarification on whether maintenance responsibility during a lease falls on the state or the owning community.

[4:23:29 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked about total available beds and whether transferring inmates to other facilities is possible, especially for long-term stays, and how movement is managed. He asked how pre-trial facilities operate in Fairbanks.

[4:24:21 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN replied that the DOC continuously transfers inmates daily to maintain safety and manage capacity. While an entire housing unit isn't typically occupied by one inmate, factors like gender distribution, custody level, court hearings, and separation needs can leave beds unused. A classification unit oversees these factors to determine inmate placement and movement. She noted that the unsentenced population has now dipped slightly below the sentenced population. She said most facilities house some unsentenced inmates, though Goose Creek was not designed for that purpose. As a result, inmates are frequently moved from Goose Creek for court hearings or to manage space, such as moving individuals from Fairbanks to other facilities to free up beds for those with upcoming hearings.

[4:26:36 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked whether the Department of Corrections sees any opportunities for budget cuts or savings, given the state's \$677 million deficit and declining oil revenues. He noted that difficult decisions are required in the coming years.

[4:27:13 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN replied that the department is constantly searching for savings but has not found major areas to cut without risking public safety. She emphasized that DOC often

absorbs the downstream effects of broader policy decisions and must balance cost concerns with protecting staff, inmates, and the public.

[4:28:09 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the department has considered reorganizing or restructuring prisons to lower cost.

[4:28:28 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN explained that while DOC does not have a broad strategic plan for efficiency, it makes daily operational adjustments, such as expanding video court access to reduce transport needs. She noted that facility use is constantly reassessed to adapt to changing inmate populations, but larger planning will depend on upcoming judicial changes that could significantly impact the system.

[4:30:12 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked for the average level of education of prisoners.

[4:30:25 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN guessed that the average level of education was high school dropout.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI compared the high cost of housing inmates (\$202 per day, about \$73,730 annually) to education spending, noting it is less than 10 percent per student, and asked whether higher education levels reduce the likelihood of committing crimes.

MS. WINKLEMAN. responded yes.

[4:31:21 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked what percentage of the inmates are confirmed gang members.

[4:31:35 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN replied that she will get back to the committee with a number.

[4:31:46 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT noted that SB 126 asks that education receive any savings. He highlighted a complementary bill supporting electronic devices for inmates, which could reduce costs through telehealth and expand access to education. He shared a personal

story about mentoring an incarcerated friend. He emphasized that compassion and education are critical to reducing recidivism.

[4:33:22 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI stated that after the repeal of Senate Bill 91 in 2018-2019, it was expected that the prison population would rise sharply and reach critical levels by 2027. However, that projection has not materialized, and Palmer Correctional Facility was reopened in 2019. He asked how many regular beds are open in the Palmer Correctional Facility.

[4:33:55 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN answered that all 514 beds are full.

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if Palmer Correctional Facility never opened and the 514 were spread through the rest of the facilities, what would the facility count be.

[4:34:17 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN answered that all facilities would be a minimum of 100 percent.

CHAIR KAWASAKI explained that reopening the facility required at least \$18 million for the first year and staffing 70 positions, reflecting a significant expense to bring it into operational status.

[4:34:57 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT asked for clarification on whether reaching 100 percent refers to average occupancy or operational capacity. He asked whether relocating 500+ inmates within Alaska would raise the 81 percent to 100 percent or the 95 percent to 100 percent.

[4:35:28 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN replied that total capacity, including all beds and segregation units, is just under 5,000 inmates. Adding 500 inmates would push operational occupancy over 100 percent, while average occupancy would exceed 90 percent, leaving only a small margin.

SENATOR YUNDT clarified that operational capacity would go over 100 percent occupancy.

MS. WINKLEMAN replied that in addition to some cells taken off line because of female ratio or different types of criminal's other cells are taken off line due to deferred maintenance or damage caused by inmates, such as broken sinks or toilets, and

these unavailable cells are included in the overall capacity calculations.

[4:36:41 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if the gym at the Fairbanks Correctional Facility (FCC) is still half full of "boats" (plastic boat shaped beds).

[4:37:09 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN replied that DOC does utilize boats in some areas but currently FCC does not have boats in the gym. She said half of the gym is being utilized and the other half has bunk beds.

[4:37:41 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI summarized that SB 126 proposes consolidating existing facilities and allowing for the placement of prisoners in out-of-state facilities. He asked how decisions would be made for designating out-of-state placements, noting that some inmates are already sent out for safety or medical reasons. He asked how designation would be decided for inmates with more than seven years remaining on their sentences.

[4:38:50 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN replied that placing inmates out-of-state would begin with a Request for Information (RFI) to identify which facilities are willing to accept specific populations, such as sex offenders, while keeping Alaska prisoners separate. After identifying suitable facilities, the classification unit would review inmates' eligibility, considering facility requirements and current in-state capacity issues, like the 110 beds offline at Lemon Creek due to construction.

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SENATOR YUNDT asked whether the 778 inmates that are in the facilities for violent crimes are all at maximum security facilities or are the inmates spread throughout the state.

[4:41:02 PM](#)

MS. WINKLEMAN stated her belief that inmates are located throughout the state but she would get back to the committee with a definitive answer. She explained that committing a crime against a person doesn't necessarily make an inmate a maximum-security offender. There are a lot of factors to consider when DOC classifies the inmates.

[4:42:51 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI held SB 126 in committee.

4:44:24 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 4:44 p.m.