

SB

237

HFIN

FILE

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPC 7

(11)

Date Referred to Committee: March 17, 2006

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: 4-26-06

The FINANCE Committee considered:

CSSB 237(FIN)

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 237(FIN)

ADDITIONAL JUDGES FOR THIRD DISTRICT

"An Act relating to the compensation of judges and judges, and to increasing the number of superior court judges designated for the third and fourth judicial districts; and providing for an effective date."

Recommends it be replaced with HCS or CS for _____ (_____)
 For Senate Bills with new title: Technical Title New Title: HCR _____ Same Title New Title

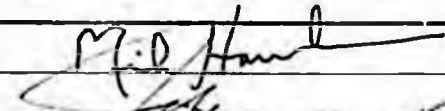



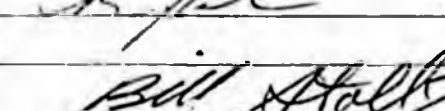
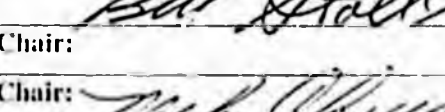
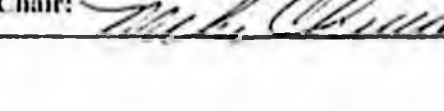

- attach amendments
- add new referral to _____ Committee
- Letter of Intent _____ Committee

List of Abbrev for Depts.:

- ADM
- CED
- COR
- CR1
- EED
- DEC
- DFG
- GOV
- HSS
- LEG
- LAW
- LWF
- MVA
- DNR
- DPS
- REV
- DOT
- UA

<u>NEW FISCAL NOTES</u>				
*Assigned by Chief Clerk's Office				
List by Dept(s):	*FN#	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero
CRT		x		
LAW		x		
LAW		x		
DPS		x		
ADM		x		
ADM		x		
COR		x		

<u>PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTES</u>				
List by Dept(s):	FN#	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero
AK JUD Council	2	x		
GOV	4	x		

Signing with recommendations	Printed Last Name	DP	DNP	NR	AM
	Hawk	x			
	Holm			✓	
	Kelly			✓	
	Toube	x			
	Toube	x		x	
	STALKE				x
Chair: 	Stalke			x	x
Chair: 	Shewfelt			x	

THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
POOR
ORIGINAL
COPIES

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSSB 237(FIN) REVISED
(S) Publish Date: 3/22/2006

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Court System
Title: Increasing the Number of Superior Court Judges RDU: Alaska Court System
Component: Court System
Sponsor: Senate Rules Committee
Requester: Governor Component No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	5,275.2	5,275.2	5,275.2	5,275.2	5,275.2	5,275.2
Travel	22.8	22.8	22.8	22.8	22.8	22.8
Contractual	84.6	96.6	96.6	96.6	96.6	96.6
Supplies	339.4	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING & CAPITAL	5,722.0	5,418.6	5,418.6	5,418.6	5,418.6	5,418.6

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	7,149.3					
-----------------------------	----------------	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	12,871.3	5,418.6	5,418.6	5,418.6	5,418.6	5,418.6
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	12,871.3	5,418.6	5,418.6	5,418.6	5,418.6	5,418.6

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	24	24	24	24	24	24
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill adds six new superior court judges: two in Palmer, two in Anchorage, one in Kenai and one in Fairbanks. This fiscal note reflects the operating and capital costs of these new positions and the necessary support staff. This fiscal note also includes the proposed salary increase for judicial positions within the court system.

Prepared by: C.S. Christensen III, Deputy Administrative Director
Division: Alaska Court System
Approved by: Stephanie Cole, Administrative Director
Agency: Alaska Court System

Phone: 463-4735
Date/Time: 3/22/06 12:39 PM
Date: 3/22/2006

Alaska Court System
 Fiscal Note Calculation for CSCB 237(FIN) REVISED
 3/22/2006

Fiscal Note #8

<u>Personal Services:</u>	<u>FY2007</u>	<u>FY2008</u>	<u>FY2009</u>	<u>FY2010</u>	<u>FY2011</u>	<u>FY2012</u>
Superior Court Judge, Anchorage, (2 pos), 82A	365,200	365,200	365,200	365,200	365,200	365,200
Law Clerk, Anchorage, (2 pos), 13D	105,200	105,200	105,200	105,200	105,200	105,200
In-Court, Anchorage, (2 pos), 12A	107,200	107,200	107,200	107,200	107,200	107,200
Administrative Asst, Anchorage, (2 pos), 12A	107,200	107,200	107,200	107,200	107,200	107,200
Superior Court Judge, Palmer, (2 pos), 82A	365,200	365,200	365,200	365,200	365,200	365,200
Law Clerk, Palmer, (2 pos), 13D	108,200	108,200	108,200	108,200	108,200	108,200
In-Court, Palmer, (2 pos), 12A	109,800	109,800	109,800	109,800	109,800	109,800
Administrative Assistant, Palmer, (2 pos), 12A	109,800	109,800	109,800	109,800	109,800	109,800
Superior Court Judge, Kenai, 82A	182,600	182,600	182,600	182,600	182,600	182,600
Law Clerk, Kenai, 13D	55,700	55,700	55,700	55,700	55,700	55,700
In-Court, Kenai, 12A	56,400	56,400	56,400	56,400	56,400	56,400
Administrative Assistant, Kenai, 12A	56,400	56,400	56,400	56,400	56,400	56,400
Superior Court Judge, Fairbanks, 82A	184,100	184,100	184,100	184,100	184,100	184,100
Law Clerk, Fairbanks, 13D	59,100	59,100	59,100	59,100	59,100	59,100
In-Court, Fairbanks, 12A	59,500	59,500	59,500	59,500	59,500	59,500
Administrative Assistant, Fairbanks, 12A	59,500	59,500	59,500	59,500	59,500	59,500
New Position Costs	2,091,100	2,091,100	2,091,100	2,091,100	2,091,100	2,091,100
Judicial Salary Increase (detail next page)	3,184,100	3,184,100	3,184,100	3,184,100	3,184,100	3,184,100
Subtotal Personal Services	5,275,200	5,275,200	5,275,200	5,275,200	5,275,200	5,275,200
Travel:						
3rd District Circuit Travel (one week per month)	11,400	11,400	11,400	11,400	11,400	11,400
4th District Circuit Travel (one week per month)	11,400	11,400	11,400	11,400	11,400	11,400
Subtotal Travel	22,800	22,800	22,800	22,800	22,800	22,800
Contractual:						
Software Maintenance and Network Costs	21,600	21,600	21,600	21,600	21,600	21,600
Software Licensing	48,000					
Moving Costs Related to Expansion of Court Facilities	15,000					
Maintenance & Utilities Costs		75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Subtotal Contractual Services	64,600	96,600	96,600	96,600	96,600	96,600
Supplies:						
Operating Supplies @ \$1,000/position	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
Furniture & Computers for New Positions	117,000					
Jury Room Furniture	26,500					
Courtroom Equipment	171,900					
Subtotal Supplies	339,400	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
Subtotal Operating Expenditures	5,722,000	5,418,600	5,418,600	5,418,600	5,418,600	5,418,600
Capital Expenditures¹						
Anchorage Remodel	270,600					
Kenai Remodel/Expansion	6,588,400					
Fairbanks Remodel/Expansion	290,300					
Subtotal Capital Expenditures	7,149,300	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total All Expenditure Categories	12,871,300	5,418,600	5,418,600	5,418,600	5,418,600	5,418,600

¹ Accommodating two additional superior court judges in Anchorage is most effectively accomplished by remodeling for two additional courtrooms and associated space in the Bailey Courthouse. The Kenai courthouse is presently exceeding designed capacity. The design of the Kenai courthouse is similar to that of Palmer, which is presently undergoing renovation and will accommodate the new positions required. Two new courtrooms and associated space for them, however, must be added. The Fairbanks funding will be used to complete chambers and staff offices on the fifth floor of the Rappaport Courthouse.

Alaska Court System
Proposed Judicial Salary Increase
Assumes Addition of Six Superior Court Judges

Description	Number of Justices or Judges	Budgeted FY07 Base Annual Salary	Proposed FY07 Annual Salary ¹	Total Budgeted FY07 Annual Salary & Benefits	Proposed FY07 Annual Salary & Benefits
Chief Justice	1	128,655	166,009	197,074	249,703
Justices	4	128,030	165,200	784,776	994,251
Administrative Director	1	125,986	163,200	194,358	248,026
Appellate Court Judges	3	120,956	156,080	558,682	707,141
Superior Court Judge	27	118,398	152,760	4,930,832	6,237,973
Superior Court Judge with 3.5% Geo-Diff on \$40K	6	118,398	152,760	1,104,339	1,394,814
Superior Court Judge with 10.5% Geo-Diff on \$40K	1	118,398	152,760	186,923	235,335
Superior Court Judge with 17.5% Geo-Diff on \$40K	6	118,398	152,760	1,138,732	1,429,207
District Court Judge	16	100,368	129,517	2,566,442	3,238,314
District Court Judge with 3.5% Geo-Diff on \$40K	3	100,368	129,517	485,640	611,616
District Court Judge with 10.5% Geo-Diff on \$40K	1	100,368	129,517	164,835	206,827
District Court Judge with 17.5% Geo-Diff on \$40K	1	100,368	129,517	167,790	209,782
				12,480,421	15,762,989

Proposed Salary Increase

3,282,568

Less Vacancy Rate of 3%

(98,500)

FY07 Funding Required for Proposed Salary Increase

3,184,100

¹The salary increase for a supreme court justice is based on the salary of a federal district court judge. The salary increases of the remaining judicial positions are proportionally adjusted based on current salary structure.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSSB237-LAW-TDC-4-4 06
() Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Law
Title: "An Act increasing the number of superior court judges designated for the third and fourth judicial districts..." RDU: Criminal Division
Sponsor: Senate Rules by Request of the Governor Component: Third Judicial District - Outside Anchorage
Requester: House Finance Component No.: _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	166.9	166.9	166.9	166.9	166.9	166.9
Travel	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Contractual	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8
Supplies	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
Equipment	13.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	198.8	185.8	185.8	185.8	185.8	185.8

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	198.8	185.8	185.8	185.8	185.8	185.8
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	198.8	185.8	185.8	185.8	185.8	185.8

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0
Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	2	2	2	2	2	2
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
The bill increases the number of superior court judges designated for the third and fourth judicial districts by adding two (2) in Anchorage, two (2) in Palmer and one (1) each in Kenai and Fairbanks. The Senate Judiciary Committee amended the Governor's originally proposed legislation to add a judge in Palmer and one in Fairbanks, increasing the number of judges the bill would add from four to six.

Because additional judges do not increase the number of cases handled by each District Attorney's office, under the original bill, the Criminal Division was prepared to absorb any increased demands with existing resources. However, with the addition of two (2) judges in Palmer, we believe that Palmer District Attorney's office will require an additional prosecutor and law office assistant.

Prepared by: Kathryn Daughhete, Director Phone: 405-3573
Division: Administrative Services Division Date/Time: 4/4/06 8:38 AM
Approved by: Kathryn Daughhete for David W. Marquez, Attorney General Date: 4/4/2006
Agency: Department of Law

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB237

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

The Palmer District Attorney's office is already extremely busy. With the population increases in the Mat-Su Valley over the past several years, the criminal caseload has steadily increased. In calendar year 2002, the Palmer office received 595 felony referrals. In calendar year 2005, that number had increased to 869 felony referrals. Additionally, the cases being referred are more complex. For example, a growing percentage of drug cases handled by Palmer involve methamphetamine labs. These lab cases are much more resource intensive than previously referred drug cases such as a possession or sale of cocaine case. Death cases are also very resource intensive; in 2005 the Palmer office had 12 homicide cases referred. Therefore, the office is dealing with a higher volume of cases, and the nature of those cases require greater resources.

Palmer has also seen an increase in the level of litigation in cases. Over the past year, the defense bar has been forcing more cases to grand jury and to trial. Thus, although the number of cases in Palmer will not increase due to increasing the number of superior court judges, the pace with which cases are processed will substantially increase. In addition, the bill doubles the number of superior court courtrooms that the office will be required to staff at any given moment. These two factors coupled with the already increasing demands in Palmer require that to make efficient use of the additional judges so that cases are processed more quickly, the Palmer office will need additional resources hereby requested.

The amount requested is in accordance with the FY 2007 timekeeping and billing rate for one additional attorney with associated support staff costs. Because Law does not typically add one law office assistant for each attorney, a slight increase to the personal services cost was added to the normal cost of new attorney to allow for full costs of a new law office assistant that will be needed.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSSB237-LAW-HS-3-29-06
() Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Law
Title: "An Act increasing the number of superior court judges designated for the third and fourth judicial districts..." RDU: CIVIL
Sponsor: Senate Rules by Request of the Governor Component: Human Services
Requester: House Finance Component No.: _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	151.4	151.4	151.4	151.4	151.4	151.4
Travel	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Contractual	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8
Supplies	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
Equipment	7.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	176.8	170.3	170.3	170.3	170.3	170.3

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	176.8	170.3	170.3	170.3	170.3	170.3
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type-Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	176.8	170.3	170.3	170.3	170.3	170.3

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0
Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	1	1	1	1	1	1
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill adds two new judges in Palmer, two in Anchorage, and one each in Fairbanks and Kenai. Additional caseload or demands on resources from the additional judges in Anchorage, Kenai, and Fairbanks will be absorbed from existing resources. The addition of two judges to the Palmer Court would require an additional attorney in the Child Protection/Human Services Section.

Child Protection Section attorneys handle Child in Need of Aid (CINA) cases throughout the state, and Human Services Section attorneys handle adult protection proceedings and foster care licensing cases. In areas where only one or two attorneys are located, these attorneys handle both Child Protection and Human Services work. For the sole attorney in the Palmer office, the current CINA caseload alone is 160, far exceeding the department's goal of 100 CINA cases per attorney, as

Prepared by: Kathryn Daughhete, Director Phone: 465-3673
Division: Administrative Services Division Date/Time: 3/30/06 9:18 AM
Approved by: Kathryn Daughhete for David W. Marquez, Attorney General Date: 3/30/2006
Agency: Department of Law

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. _____

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

recommended by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children in 2002. In 2004, the American Bar Association issued Standards of Practice for Lawyers Representing Child Welfare Agencies. That body recommended a maximum of 60 active cases.

As a result of the excessive caseload in Palmer, attorneys from Anchorage must not only assist with the CINA overload, but take over adult protection and foster care licensing cases. With the addition of another attorney in Palmer, the two positions would carry a more manageable caseload consisting of CINA, adult protection, and foster care licensing cases, freeing Anchorage attorneys to handle increasing caseloads that will result from the the two new judges this bill proposes to add there.

Caseloads in the Palmer court for all these types of cases have increased dramatically as a result of the steady rise in population in the Mat-Su Valley. Probate filings (where cases involving guardianships of adults and minors are brought) increased 27% between FY 2004 and FY 2005. Cases involving children's matters also increased 13% for this same time period. As the population in the Mat-Su region continues to increase, case loads will continue to increase.

Further, the Mat-Su region has seen a significant and growing amount of methamphetamine manufacturing and use. When people manufacture and/or use meth in their homes, there are many hazards and risks created for children in these homes, from chemical contamination to increased risk of sexual abuse from parents or adults using the drug. In one day in October, 2005, AST busted three labs. Children under the age of 5 were located at two of the homes, but children resided in each of those homes, resulting in three new CINA cases in one day.

The number of cases does not tell the whole story. For whatever reason, cases in the Palmer court are contested more often than in other parts of the state. The Palmer attorney has stated that she has had contested proceedings (temporary custody hearings, adjudications or termination trials, or placement hearings) on 176 occasions between February 2005 and March 2006. She was either in court for an entire trial day or in court for a portion of a day for an evidentiary hearing. This far exceeds the amount of trial time spent by other attorneys in the state.

The addition of two more judges will make it impossible for one attorney to handle Child Protection/Human Services cases scheduled before six different judicial officers including the district court judge and master. As it currently stands, the judges have not been able to accommodate the Palmer attorney's schedule, and she is often booked to be in two courtrooms at once.

Because there are only two superior court judges now and the courts' calendars are booked up, trials are often continued. Although the Office of Children's Services is required by federal law to hold hearings within certain timeframes in order to achieve timely permanent placements for children, it is frankly a relief to the attorney in this position that the trials are continued because of her already overburdened schedule. A second AAG will be necessary in order for our office to be prepared for those hearings and to advance cases more quickly.

The cost of the additional attorney is in accordance with the Department of Law's FY 2007 timekeeping and billing rate for one FTE attorney position including allocated administrative support and overhead costs such as telephones, network chargeback.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: SB237CS(JUD)-DPS-JSA-3-29-06
() Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correc: _____ Dept. Affected: Public Safety
Title: "An Act increasing the number of superior court judges..." RDU: Alaska State Troopers
Sponsor: Governor Compon: JS Anchorage; AST Detachments
Requester: House Finance Committee Component No.: 831:2325

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	284.0	284.0	284.0	284.0	284.0	284.0
Travel						
Contractual	85.3	70.0	70.0	70.0	70.0	70.0
Supplies	12.7	12.7	12.7	12.7	12.7	12.7
Equipment	119.5					
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	501.5	366.7	366.7	366.7	366.7	366.7

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES (
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	501.5	366.7	366.7	366.7	366.7	366.7
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviat						
TOTAL	501.5	366.7	366.7	366.7	366.7	366.7

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0
Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget pr _____

POSITIONS

Full-time	4	4	4	4	4	4
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: *(Attach a separate page if necessary)*

Passage of this legislation will have a significant fiscal impact on the Department of Public Safety.

This bill adds six new superior court judges in the State of Alaska. They will be assigned in the following manner: two in Anchorage, two in Palmer, one in Fairbanks, and one in Kenai.

By statute, the commissioner of the Department of Public Safety is the executive officer of the Alaska Supreme Court. Across the state, those responsibilities are delegated and carried out by the Alaska State Troopers (AST) and Court Services Officers (CSO) assigned to Judicial Services units within the Division of AST.

Prepared by: Special Assistant Cliff Stone Phone: 907-465-2649
Division: Office of the Commissioner Date/Time: 3/29/06 11:58 AM
Approved by: Commissioner William Tandeske Date: 3/29/2006
Agency: Department of Public Safety

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB237CS(JUD)DPS-JSA-5-25-06

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Security provided by Judicial Services includes protection of the public, the judiciary, and prisoners; security of court facilities; and maintaining peace and order in the courtrooms. Judicial Services transports felons, misdemeanants, and fugitives between institutions, between institutions and courthouses, and to and from doctor's appointments. Troopers and officers assigned to Judicial Services also transport prisoners within and outside of Alaska.

Judicial Services also serve court writs that include subpoenas, summons and complaints, writs of assistance, evictions, executions, child custody orders, mental health commitments, domestic violence protective orders, and several other types of court process.

This fiscal note reflects the operating cost for three new Court Services Officers (CSO), one Administrative Clerk II, and all necessary vehicles, equipment and supplies to support these new positions.

One new CSO will be assigned to Anchorage, one to Fairbanks, and one to Palmer along with vehicles and associated equipment. The new administrative clerk will also be assigned to Palmer.

These new positions are in addition to the five new CSO's this department has in the Governor's FY2007 budget request needed to handle the already overwhelming workload. Over the years, the number of CSO positions has neither kept pace with the increase in the number of criminal and civil cases, nor with the increase in the number of judges or courts to be served.

Judicial Services-Anchorage (component #831)

	CSO	TOTAL
Pers Svcs	78.6	78.6
Travel		0.0
Contractual	26.5	26.5
Supplies	4.0	4.0
Equipment	38.8	38.8
Total	147.9	147.9
PFT	1	1

AST Detachments (component #2325)

	CSO	Adm Clk. II	TOTAL
Pers Svcs	159.8	45.6	205.4
Travel			0.0
Contractual	53.0	5.8	58.8
Supplies	8.0	0.7	8.7
Equipment	77.6	3.1	80.7
Total	298.4	55.2	353.6
PFT	2	1	3

Court Service Officer's positions - Accumulated Comparisons

City	Current FY06	Gov. FY07	SB 237
Anchorage	18	19	20
Fairbanks	7	8	9
Palmer	5	6	7

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number _____
Bill Version: CSSB 237(FIN)
() Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): 4/3/06 6:27 p.m. Dept. Affected: Administration
Title: An Act increasing the number of superior court RDU: Legal and Advocacy Services
judges designated for the third and fourth..... Component: Office of Public Advocacy
Sponsor: Senate Rules Committee
Requester: Governor Component No. 43

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	194.0	194.0	194.0	194.0	194.0	194.0
Travel						
Contractual	74.6	74.6	74.6	74.6	74.6	74.6
Supplies	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Equipment	13.4	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	286.0	274.6	274.6	274.6	274.6	274.6

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	286.0	274.6	274.6	274.6	274.6	274.6
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	286.0	274.6	274.6	274.6	274.6	274.6

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0
Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	2	2	2	2	2	2
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: *(Attach a separate page if necessary)*
This legislation adds six new superior court judges: two in Anchorage, two in Palmer, one in Kenai, and one in Fairbanks. This will greatly improve the efficiency of the court, allowing for more timely motion rulings, hearings, and trials. The increased efficiency of the court system in processing both criminal and civil matters will put pressure on OPA's resources -- requiring more timely processing of motions, and resulting in a greater number of hearings and trials occurring simultaneously.

See attached page for further analysis.

Prepared by: Joshua P. Fink, Director Phone: (907) 269-3500
Division: Office of Public Advocacy Date/Time: 4/3/06 at 6:27 pm
Approved by: Mike Tibbles, Deputy Commissioner Date: 4/4/2006
Agency: Administration

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 237(FIN)

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Initially, when this legislation would have created four (4) additional superior court judgeships, OPA submitted an indeterminate fiscal note as the agency did not feel it was possible to estimate with any precision the increased costs. However, under this amended legislation, two (2) additional superior court judgeships will be created and an indeterminate fiscal note does not adequately reflect the financial demands this will place on OPA.

CSSB 237 (FIN) doubles the superior court judicial capacity in the Mat-Su Valley. This is the busiest court in the state, and the busiest OPA office.

In FY '05, the two superior court judges in Palmer handled 655 cases. This resulted in 2,390 events being scheduled. An event is counted each day that it is scheduled and includes a raignment, bail, adjudication, disposition, evidentiary, and representation hearings, as well as jury trials. Doubling this judicial capacity at the felony level will require additional resources at the OPA Palmer office to ensure coverage of the aforementioned hearings and to ensure adequate preparation for civil (CINA, probate, juvenile delinquency, custody) and criminal cases as they move forward at a more efficient pace. Thus, where the backlog was tenable in terms of workload for OPA staff attorneys, when there were only two superior court judges as they could only be in two places at one time, doubling this capacity to four judges will require additional resources to keep pace with the increase judicial capacity and efficiency.

OPA will need one new attorney in Palmer with a split criminal/civil caseload. This position would be expected to carry half a criminal caseload and half of a civil case load (parental representation of parents in CINA matters, probate proceedings, custody matters, and juvenile delinquencies). OPA will also need a non-attorney guardian ad litem to handle additional and more timely CINA hearings. (The current GAL in the Valley has a caseload exceeding 100 children and new cases are contracted out or covered by the Anchorage GALs).

Finally, OPA is requesting an additional \$30.0 in contract costs for the Kena Peninsula where OPA utilizes Palmer staff attorneys for high level felony cases and otherwise contracts with local contractors. (OPA does not have an office on the Kena Peninsula). Cases on the Peninsula have been spiking, as have costs, and this spike will increase with the addition of a new superior court judge, increasing judicial capacity there by 33% in a venue with similar problems to the Mat-Su Valley.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSSB 237(FII)
() Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): 3/28/06/ 3:06 p.m. Dept. Affected: Administration
Title: An Act increasing the number of superior court judges RDU: Legal and Advocacy Services
judges designated for the third and fourth..... Component: Public Defender Agency
Sponsor: Senate Rules Committee
Requester: Governor Component No: 1631

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	228.0	228.0	228.0	228.0	228.0	228.0
Travel	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2
Contractual	36.7	36.7	36.7	36.7	36.7	36.7
Supplies	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Equipment	20.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	295.0	276.9	276.9	276.9	276.9	276.9

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	295.0	276.9	276.9	276.9	276.9	276.9
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type-Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	295.0	276.9	276.9	276.9	276.9	276.9

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0
Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	3	3	3	3	3	3
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

See analysis continuation section.

Prepared by: Quinlan Steiner, Director Phone: (907) 334-4414
Division: Public Defender Agency Date/Time: 3/28/06 3:06 p.m.
Approved by: Mike Tobias, Deputy Commissioner Date: 3/28/2006
Agency: Administration

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSE 237(FIN)

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

This bill increases the number of superior court judges by adding two (2) in Anchorage, two (2) in Palmer and one (1) in Kenai and one (1) in Fairbanks. Increasing judicial resources is expected to impact both the civil cases and criminal cases handled by the agency. The additional judicial availability posed by six new judges is expected to require one additional attorney, one additional paralegal, and one additional law office assistant.

The agency expects to place one attorney and one law office assistant in Palmer and one paralegal in Anchorage. It is not expected that adding a judge to Kenai and Fairbanks will require additional resources. Kenai recently received an additional attorney and law office assistant. The appellate caseload in Fairbanks has recently been transferred to Anchorage, and the position has remained in Fairbanks to absorb caseload increases.

Palmer will require additional resources because the population in the region is the fastest growing in the state and the criminal and CINA filings are expected to similarly increase. Additionally, the Palmer office is operating at capacity, and placing resources before the new judges will not be possible without additional staff. Consistent with the Agency's overall strategic plan, it is expected that adding low-cost support staff, rather than merely adding attorneys, will increase efficiency sufficient to accommodate the increase in work associated with two additional judges.

Anchorage will require an additional paralegal position because a new judge is expected to decrease the amount of time that a case waits for an evidentiary hearing on motions; the current waiting period is in excess of two months. A low-cost paralegal position is, therefore, required to assist attorneys in preparing for motion hearings that will occur in greater frequency.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: CSSB 237 (FIN)
() Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Corrections
Title: "An Act increasing the number of superior court judges designated for the third and fourth judicial districts..." RDU: Probation and Parole
Sponsor: Rules Committee Component: Statewide Probation and Parole
Requester: Governor Component No.: 2826

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include initiation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	208.2	418.8	418.8	418.8	418.8	418.8
Travel	16.0	35.0	35.0	36.0	36.0	36.0
Contractual	39.6	79.2	79.2	79.2	79.2	79.2
Supplies	27.9	35.1	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	293.7	569.1	548.4	548.4	548.4	548.4

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	293.7	569.1	548.4	548.4	548.4	569.1
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Heal'n						
Other (Specify Type - Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	293.7	569.1	548.4	548.4	548.4	548.4

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0
Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	3	6	6	6	6	6
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
The legislation adds six new superior court judges: two in Anchorage, two in Palmer, one in Kenai and one in Fairbanks. The fiscal impact to the department primarily will be in the Division of Probation & Parole, due to the increased workload surrounding felony pre-sentence investigations (PSI) and pre-sentence report (PSR) production for the superior court. A fulltime PSI/PSR Probation Officer can handle about 10 to 13 investigations and reports each month, which is about the same number (10 to 15) ordered by a superior court judge each month. The department estimates that the division will require one additional probation officer for PSI/PSR production for each new superior court judge. The department anticipates hiring three new probation officers in FY07 and three more in FY08 to fulfill the PSI/PSR demands of six additional superior court judges.

Prepared by: Sharileen Griffin, Director Phone: (907) 465-3339
Division: Administrative Services Date/Time: 3/23/06 12:05 PM
Approved by: Portia C.K. Parker, Deputy Commissioner Date: 3/23/2006
Agency: Department of Corrections

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2
Bill Version: CSSB 237 (JUD)
(S) Publish Date: 2/9/06

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Alaska Judicial Council
Title: Addition of 6 x Superior Court Judges RDU: Alaska Judicial Council
Component: Alaska Judicial Council
Sponsor: Senate Rules Committee
Requester: Governor Component No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services						
Travel	18.0	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Contractual	53.1	7.0	6.9	9.0	7.6	6.9
Supplies	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	71.9	9.4	9.2	11.4	9.9	9.2

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

FUND SOURCE	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	71.9	9.4	9.2	11.4	9.9	9.2
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	71.9	9.4	9.2	11.4	9.9	9.2

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill adds six new superior court judges: two in Palmer, two in Anchorage, one in Fairbanks, and one in Kenai. This fiscal note reflects the costs of soliciting, investigating, and screening applicants to fill the positions in FY 07; the costs of filling subsequent vacancies in these positions (amortized over 12 years, the average term for a superior court judge); and the costs of evaluating these judges and making retention recommendations to the public (initial appearance on ballot in November 2010 and every six years thereafter)

Prepared by: Larry Cohn, Executive Director Phone: 907-279-2526, ext 1
Division: _____ Date/Time: 2/9/06 3:45 PM
Approved by: Larry Cohn, Executive Director Date: 2/9/2006
Agency: Alaska Judicial Council

Alaska Judicial Council
 Fiscal Note Calculation for SB 237
 2/9/2006

Fiscal Note #2
 CSSB 237(JUD)

	<u>FY 2007</u>	<u>FY 2008</u>	<u>FY 2009</u>	<u>FY 2010</u>	<u>FY 2011</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>
<u>Travel</u>						
Judicial Council Travel - Selection meetings	18,000	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250
Subtotal Travel	18,000	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250
<u>Contractual</u>						
Printing and mail processing of vacancy announcements	5,024	523	523	523	523	523
Printing and mail processing of selection surveys	9,360	1,170	1,170	1,170	1,170	1,170
Printing of juror survey cards for retention evaluation	0	150	0	0	0	0
Electronic hosting of online selection surveys	8,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Analysis of selection survey data	29,287	3,999	3,999	999	3,999	3,999
Analysis of retention survey data	0	0	0	1,420	0	0
Advertising of Council selection meetings	1,200	150	150	150	150	150
Advertising to solicit public comment re: retention	0	0	0	700	0	0
Advertising Council retention recommendations	0	0	0	0	700	0
Applicant credit histories	184	26	26	50	26	26
Subtotal Contractual	53,055	7,018	6,868	9,012	7,568	6,868
<u>Supplies</u>						
Paper for surveys	856	117	117	180	117	117
Subtotal Supplies	856	117	117	180	117	117
Subtotal Operating Expenditures	71,911	9,385	9,235	11,442	9,935	9,235
<u>Grand Total All Expenditure Categories</u>	<u>71,911</u>	<u>9,385</u>	<u>9,235</u>	<u>11,442</u>	<u>9,935</u>	<u>9,235</u>

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 4
Bill Version: CSSB 237(FIN)
(S) Publish Date: 2/17/06

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: OOG
Title: "An Act increasing the number of superior court judges designated for the third judicial..." RDU: Elections
Component: Elections
Sponsor: Senate Rules Committee
Requester: Senate Finance Committee Component No. 21

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual				9.0		
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF				9.0		
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill adds six new superior court judges, five in the third judicial district and one in the fourth judicial district. If the judges are appointed in 2007, they would be subject to an initial retention election in 2010 (AS 15 35 060). This amount reflects the costs associated with printing the judicial candidate pages in the Official Election Pamphlet, as required by AS 15 58

Prepared by: Whitney Brewster, Director Phone 465-2644
Division: Division of Elections Date/Time 2/13/2006 11:33am
Approved by: Whitney Brewster, Director Date 2/13/2006
Agency: Office of the Lt. Governor, Division of Elections

ALASKA STATE SENATE



Session:
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-2327
(907) 465-5241 Fax

Interim:
119 N. Cushman, Suite 201
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 456-8161
Senator_Ralph_Seekins@legis.state.ak.us

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Senator Ralph Seekins, Chairman

Senate Bill 237 Letter of Intent

February 9, 2006

The legislature finds that the Alaska Court System has experienced a steady multi-year trend in the growth of the criminal caseload. Much of the growth in criminal caseload has occurred in Anchorage, Palmer, Kenai, and Fairbanks in part due to rapid increases in population in some areas. For example, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough had a 77 percent increase in population from 1990 to 2004 and a 39 percent increase in felony case filings for fiscal year 2004 alone. Overall, felony criminal case filings with the court have increased by approximately 20 percent from fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2004.

Felony criminal cases are typically the most complex and time intensive criminal cases that the Alaska Court System handles. Over the years, these cases have become even more complex and therefore time consuming due to changes in the nature of criminal cases and the use of scientific evidence in a greater number of cases. Additionally, increased participation by victims and other new court procedures have resulted in cases requiring more actual courtroom time prior to resolution. Felony criminal cases are becoming back-logged to a degree that undermines the criminal justice system.

Prosecutors, law enforcement and others who regularly appear before the Alaska Court System recognize that additional superior court judges are essential for the efficient handling of the felony caseload. The legislature finds that justice will be better served for victims, defendants and the general public if the court system has the resources necessary for efficient processing of these cases.

Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature that the additional superior court judges authorized by this bill be assigned to criminal matters, or be utilized by the court system in a manner that will allow criminal matters to be more efficiently processed by the court.

Adopted by the Senate

Date: 3/15/06

COMMITTEE COPY

adn.com

Anchorage Daily News

Print Page

Close Window

More judges are needed**Legislators should support adding seats to the bench***(Published: February 18, 2006)*

To be effective, justice should be swift, certain and fair. But speed and certainty are at risk in Alaska with a growing state population that is boosting civil and criminal caseloads, especially in the Mat-Su.

That's why the state House and Senate are considering bills presented by the governor to increase the number of Superior Court judges, particularly in the 3rd Judicial District, which encompasses Mat-Su, Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula. The Senate bill would add six judges -- two in Palmer, two in Anchorage and one in Kenai, along with an additional judge in Fairbanks. The House version would add four judges -- two in Anchorage, one in Palmer and one in Kenai.

It's been five years since lawmakers have added a Superior Court judge to the Anchorage bench, during which time the city has added more than 15,000 residents. It's been 10 years since Palmer got its second Superior Court judge. Since then, the Mat-Su Borough has grown by almost 25,000 people.

The Senate version of the legislation makes the most long-term sense, both for filling immediate needs and anticipating increased caseloads.

The proposed addition of two judges for the Palmer courthouse is particularly welcome in the Valley, where cases have increased four times the rate of criminal cases statewide, and where some minor crimes go unpunished. Between 2003 and 2004, the number of new felony cases filed at the Palmer court rose by 38 percent.

Judges aren't the only answer in the Valley, where police, state troopers, prosecutors and courts all are overworked. But legislators have a chance to contribute to speedier justice in felony cases by giving the courts the judges and staff they need. Swifter prosecution of those cases would make more time available to prosecute misdemeanor offenses, too. That way, minor offenders wouldn't walk off without consequences, taking with them an increased contempt for the law.

Adding six judges will cost money, for the new judges and necessary support staff. The Senate Judiciary Committee proposal would add more than \$2 million a year to the state budget. All state spending, however, comes down to choices. In this case, adding judges to the bench would do Alaskans a lot more good than the governor's proposed public relations campaign to sell Alaska's political wishes to the rest of the country -- and for about the same price in next year's budget.

Adding enough judges to handle the work is a budget need the state cannot afford to ignore; it's a necessary investment in public safety and swift justice. Lawmakers should do this now, before the problem gets worse.

BOTTOM LINE: Alaska has a growing population and a growing criminal caseload that calls for more judges.

For SB 237 000

**Previous Fiscal Notes that the Committee Needs to Adopt:
Important!**

Fiscal Note 2: Alaska Judicial Council

Fiscal Note 4: Office of Governor-Elections

**New Fiscal Notes that the Committee Needs to Adopt: Very
Important!**

Administration: OPA, dated 04/03/06

New Note, one has not previously been issued for this agency

Administration: Public Defender, dated 03/28/06

New Note, one has not previously been issued for this agency

Alaska Court System: Salary Increase and New Judges, dated 03/22/06

Replaces previous Fiscal Note 7

Dept. of Corrections: Probation and Parole, dated 03/23/06

Replaces Fiscal Note 5

Dept. of Law-Criminal Division, dated 04/04/06

Replaces Fiscal Note 6

Public Safety: AST, dated 03/29/06

New Note, one has not previously been issued for this agency

Dept. of Law: Civil Section, dated 03/30/06

New Note, one has not previously been issued for this agency

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI
GOVERNOR
GOVERNOR@GOV.STATE.AK.US



P.O. BOX 110001
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0001
(907) 465-3500
FAX (907) 465-3532
WWW.GOV.STATE.AK.US

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

January 13, 2006

The Honorable Ben Stevens
President of the Senate
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Stevens:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill that would add a total of four Superior Court judge positions to the third judicial district in the state court system.

As Alaska's population grows, the demand on the court system from both civil and criminal cases increases. The population growth does not occur uniformly throughout the state. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough had a 77 percent increase in population from 1990 to 2004 and a 39 percent increase in felony case filings for fiscal year 2004. The Palmer court is perhaps the most overcrowded court in the system.

The impact on the court system of felony criminal cases is very burdensome. Criminal cases, particularly violent felony criminal cases, are often the most complex and time-sensitive types of cases handled by the court system. They are also the most likely type of case to proceed to a time-consuming trial. Time is of the essence to both the victims of crimes waiting for justice to be served and the accused seeking resolution to the criminal charges.

The additional Superior Court judge positions provided for under this bill are essential to the efficient operation of the court system.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank H. Murkowski".

Frank H. Murkowski
Governor

COMMITTEE COPY