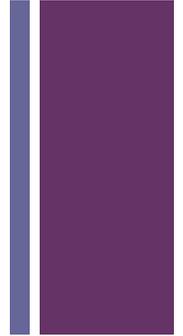


Rural Providers' Conference
Nome, Alaska
June 2015

The Alaska
Criminal Justice
Commission



Establishment; staff



- AS 44.19 was amended to create the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission.
- The Commission has a three-year term from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017.
- The Commission is in the Office of the Governor.
- Staff and administrative support is provided by the Judicial Council.

+ Membership

13 voting members:

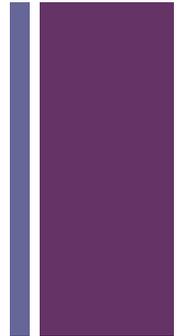


- Member of Alaska Native community designated by Alaska Native Justice Center
- Director of Mental Health Trust or designee
- Governor's appointees
 - law enforcement
 - Victim's rights advocate
- State agencies
 - AG
 - DOC
 - DPS
 - Public Defender
- Three judges (one each from district court, superior court and appellate court), appointed by Chief Justice
- 2 legislators (non-voting): State Senator appointed by Senate President, State Representative appointed by House Speaker

+ Reports



- The Commission may - at any time during its three year term - recommend changes to criminal laws and practices.
- The Commission must also make annual reports to the Legislature on February 1, 2016 and February 1, 2017; and
- A special report regarding DUI and other provisions in AS 28 by June 30, 2017.



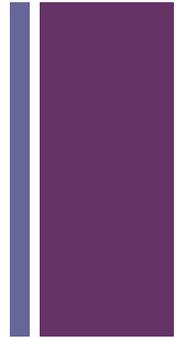
+ Powers & duties

- Evaluate the impact of state sentencing laws and criminal justice practices;
- Consider whether existing laws do: protect the public, the rights of victims of crimes, the rights of those accused and convicted; provide for restitution; express community disapproval but still uphold the principle of reformation (rehabilitation);
- Ask for information, ideas and and opinions from a variety of constituencies; and finally,
- Make recommendations for improving our criminal laws and sentencing practices.



+ Why the ACJC?

- Our rate of criminal recidivism – being re-arrested - is “just too high.”
- Most inmates are back in jail within six months of their release.
- 67% of all offenders and 74% of Alaska Native offenders will recidivate within three years.
- Alaska’s prison population is growing at a rate of 3% or more each year.





■ And the costs of mass incarceration are unsustainable.

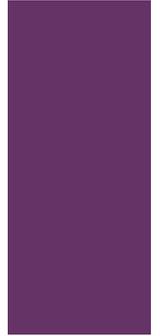
■ The current cost of incarceration is \$159 each day or \$58,000 each year for each prison bed.

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■ At the current rate of incarceration, a new prison will need to be built in 2.5 years at a minimum cost of \$250 million and annual operating cost of \$50 million each year.



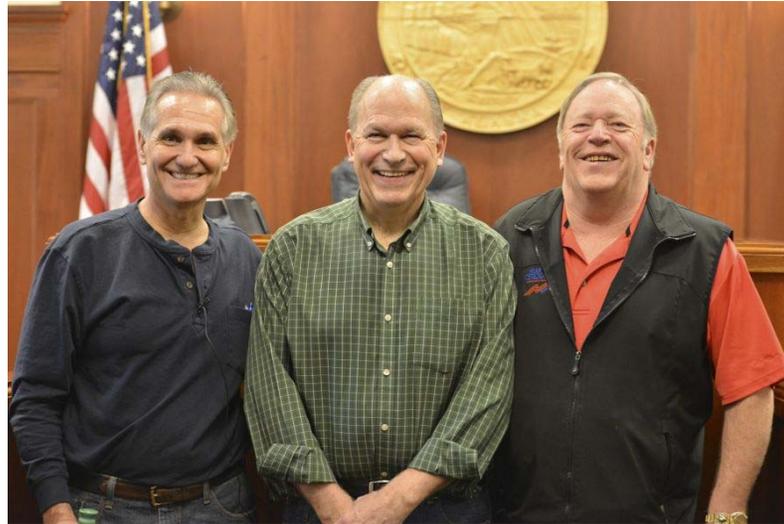
As in most states, illegal drug users, non-violent offenders and pretrial defendants occupy a lot of prison beds.



- Arrests for drug offenses last year represented about 4% of Alaska arrests. But 9.1% of DOC beds are occupied by drug offenders.
- Last June, DOC stated that 57% of the persons housed in Alaska's prisons were there for non-violent offenses.
- The 97% percentage of all drug cases filed in 2012 were charged as MISC 4, suggesting they involved personal use quantities, relatively small quantities of drugs or marijuana distributions.
- The DOC has estimated that 37-40% of its beds are occupied by defendants either awaiting trial or awaiting probation revocations.



This is something everyone can agree on: “Justice Reinvestment”



- In January, all three branches of government invited the Pew Trust to partner with the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission to answer its questions and provide it with ideas for innovation. Pew’s Justice Reinvestment Initiative is a form of data-driven technical assistance.
- The idea is to reduce correctional spending and reinvest in recidivism-reduction strategies are more cost-effective.



Questions the Legislature wants answered:

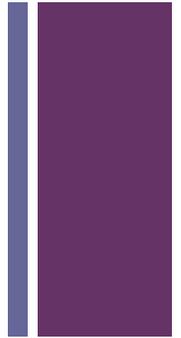
- How do our crime rates – including those of drug offenses - in Alaska compare to other states?
- What are the best practices adopted by other states that have proven to be successful in reducing recidivism?
- Can both crime and recidivism rates be reduced?





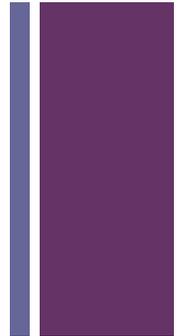
More good questions...

- Does the state have enough treatment and rehabilitation programs to meet offenders' and ex-offenders' needs? How effective are the programs we do have?
- Regarding DUI offenses:
 - Are the penalties appropriate?
 - Should limited licenses be available for offenders?
 - Are ignition interlock devices effective?
 - What else should be done?
- Are the drug schedules in our statutes (AS 11.71.140 - 11.71.190) reasonable and are our penalties appropriate?

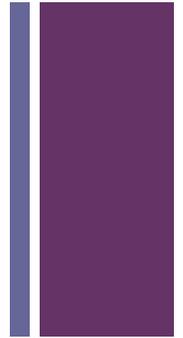


+ Some of the ideas already brought to the Criminal Justice Commission:

- Allow treatment costs paid by DUI offenders to offset their mandated fines
- Allow for pretrial diversion of some offenses
- Institute deferred disposition (dismissals of criminal charges if treatment program is completed)
- Institutionalize partnerships between tribal and state courts
- Use electronic monitoring and portable breathalyzers as an alternative to pretrial detention
- Make more limited licenses available for work
- Pass 'Ban the Box' legislation
- Make sure offenders' PFDs go to victim restitution

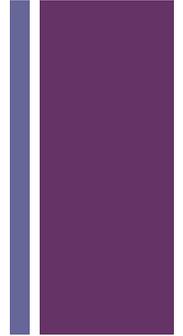


+ Your thoughts?





Thank you!



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