



# **Alaska Criminal Justice Commission**

## **Justice Reinvestment Report**

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*December 2015*

## Acknowledgements

The Alaska Criminal Justice Commission (“Commission”) would like to thank the following agencies, associations, and individuals for their assistance throughout the Commission’s work:

### **Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**

Lauree Morton

### **Alaska Court System**

Natalie Alexie  
Michelle Bartley  
Dave Bauer  
Tracey Buie  
Sharon Chen  
Lisa Fitzpatrick  
Sharon Heidersdorf  
Christine Johnson  
Brodie Kimmel  
James Kwon  
Cynthia Lee  
Robert Lewis  
Nancy Meade  
Ruth Meier  
Debbie Miller  
Julie Monsen  
Kelley Montgomery  
Josh Preston  
Paul Roetman  
Doug Wooliver

### **Alaska Department of Health and Social Services**

Val Davidson  
Karen Forrest  
Darrell Garrison  
Tony Piper  
Albert Wall  
Alysa Wooden

### **Alaska Department of Corrections**

Tomi Anderson  
Carrie Belden  
Gail Brimmer  
Laura Brooks  
Rebecca Brunger  
L. Diane Casto  
Sherrie Daigle  
Kay Hoover  
Remond Henderson  
Billy Houser

Ashley Lally  
Dean Marshall  
Mike Matthews  
Sandra Martinson  
Gary Olson  
Adam Rutherford  
Keith Thayer  
Brann Wade  
April Wilkerson

### **Alaska Department of Law**

Clint Champion  
Melanie Ferguson  
Michael Gray  
Stacey Kralee  
Nancy Korting  
Jack McKenna  
Gregg Olson  
Kaci Schroeder  
John Skidmore

### **Alaska Department of Public Safety**

Orin Dym  
Kathy Monfreda  
Rick Roberts

### **Alaska Federation of Natives**

Maude Blair

### **Alaska Mental Health Trust**

Anna Brawley  
Lila Hobbs  
Valette Keller  
Steve Williams  
Carmen Gutierrez

### **Alaska Native Justice Center**

Denise Morris

### **Alaska Office of Victims’ Rights**

Taylor Winston

### **Alaska Parole Board**

Jeffrey Edwards  
Lonzo Henderson  
Sarah Possenti

### **Alaska Public Defender Agency**

Dunnington Babb  
Regan Williams  
Terrence Haas

### **Anchorage Municipal Prosecutor’s Office**

Seneca Theno

### **Alaska State Legislature**

Fred Dyson  
Amory Lelake  
Ken Truitt  
Jordan Shilling

### **First Alaskans Institute**

Darlene Trigg  
Jorie Ayyu Paoli

### **Kotzebue Police Department**

Eric Swisher

### **Office of Governor Bill Walker**

Craig Kahlken  
Natasha McClanahan  
Pat Pitney  
Sylvan Robb  
Lacy Wilcox  
Dean Williams

### **Office of the Public Advocate**

Richard Allen

### **Partners for Progress**

Janet McCabe  
Doreen Schenkenberger

### **Tribal Elders**

Liz Dillon  
Liz Sunnyboy

### **University of Alaska, Anchorage, Justice Center**

Barbara Armstrong  
Andre Rosay

The Commission would like to further acknowledge the invaluable support of the Alaska Judicial Council staff, including Brian Brossmer, Teri Carns, Susanne DiPietro, Susie Dosik, Mary Geddes, Rhonda Hala, Giulia Kaufman, Jennie Marshall-Hoenack, and Emily Marrs.

## Executive Summary

Alaska's prison population has grown by 27 percent in the last decade, almost three times faster than the resident population. This rapid growth spurred the opening of the state's newest correctional facility – Goose Creek Correctional Center – in 2012, costing the state \$240 million in construction funds. On July 1, 2014, Alaska's correctional facilities housed 5,267 inmates, and the Department of Corrections ("DOC") had a fiscal year operating budget of \$327 million.

Absent reform, these trends are projected to continue: Alaska will need to house an additional 1,416 inmates by 2024, surpassing the state's current prison bed capacity by 2017. This growth is estimated to cost the state at least \$169 million in new corrections spending over the next 10 years.

The rising cost of Alaska's prison population coupled with the state's high recidivism rate – almost two-thirds of inmates released from the state's facilities return within three years – have led policymakers to consider whether the state is achieving the best public safety return on its corrections spending.

Seeking a comprehensive review of the state's corrections and criminal justice systems, the 2014 Alaska Legislature established the bi-partisan, interbranch Alaska Criminal Justice Commission ("Commission").

In April of the following year, state leaders from all three branches of government joined together to request technical assistance from the Public Safety Performance Project of The Pew Charitable Trusts and the U.S. Department of Justice as part of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative. Governor Bill Walker, former Chief Justice Dana Fabe, Senate President Kevin Meyer, House Speaker Mike Chenault, Attorney General Craig Richards, former Commissioner of the Alaska DOC Ron Taylor, and former Chair of the Commission Alexander O. Bryner tasked the Commission with "develop[ing] recommendations aimed at safely controlling prison and jail growth and recalibrating our correctional investments to ensure that we are achieving the best possible public safety return on our state dollars."

In addition, Senate President Meyer and Speaker Chenault requested that, because the state's difficult budget situation rendered reinvestment in evidence-based programs and treatment possible only with significant reforms, the Commission forward policy options that would not only avert future prison growth, but would also reduce the prison population between 15 and 25 percent below current levels.

Over a seven-month period, the Commission analyzed the state's criminal justice system, including a comprehensive review of sentencing, corrections, and community supervision data. Key findings include:

- Alaska's pretrial population has grown by 81 percent over the past decade, driven primarily by longer lengths of stay for both felony and misdemeanor defendants.

- Three-quarters of offenders entering prison post-conviction in 2014 were convicted of a nonviolent offense.
- Length of stay for sentenced felony offenders is up 31 percent over the past decade.
- In 2014, 47 percent of post-revocation supervision violators – who are incarcerated primarily for non-criminal violations of probation and parole conditions – stayed more than 30 days, and 28 percent stayed longer than 3 months behind bars.

Based on this analysis, and the directive from legislative leadership, the Commission developed a comprehensive, evidence-based package of 21 consensus policy recommendations that would protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and reduce the state's average daily prison population by 21 percent, netting estimated savings of \$424 million over the next decade.

## Members of the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission

Gregory P. Razo (Chair)	Alaska Native Justice Center
Justice Alexander O. Bryner	Alaska Supreme Court (retired)
Senator John Coghill	Alaska State Senate
Commissioner Gary Folger	Alaska Department of Public Safety
Jeff Jessee	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Representative Wes Keller	Alaska House of Representatives
Commissioner Walt Monegan	Alaska Department of Corrections
Hon. Judge Stephanie Rhoades	Anchorage District Court
Attorney General Craig Richards	Alaska Department of Law
Lieutenant Kris Sell	Juneau Police Department
Brenda Stanfill	Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living
Quinlan Steiner	Alaska Public Defender
Hon. Judge Trevor Stephens	Ketchikan Superior Court

*Terry Vrabec, former Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety and Ron Taylor, former Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, were previous members of the Commission and initial participants in the Justice Reinvestment process.*

## Challenges Facing Alaska

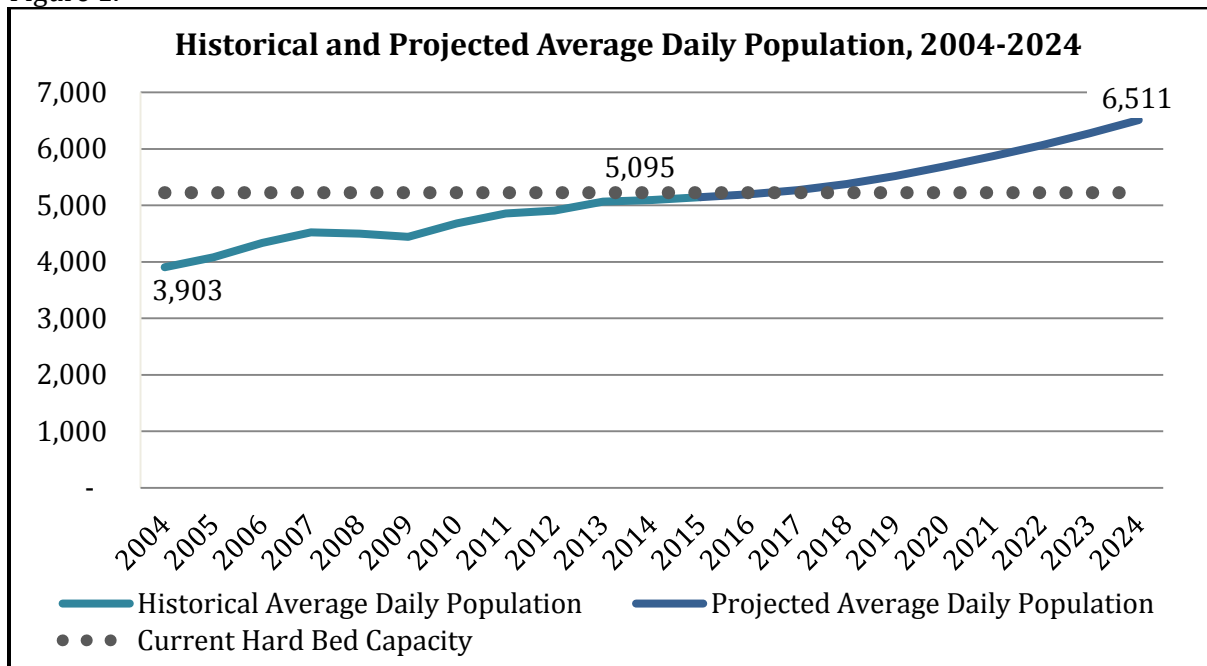
Alaska's prison population, which includes both pretrial and post-conviction inmates, has grown by 27 percent in the last decade, nearly three times faster than the resident population.<sup>1</sup> Alaska's overall correctional population, which includes incarcerated offenders as well as offenders on probation and parole, electronic monitoring, and in halfway houses, grew 45 percent over the last decade. On July 1, 2014, Alaska's correctional facilities housed 5,267 inmates and the total number of offenders under the Department of Corrections' ("DOC") control numbered 11,136.

Growth in the state's prison and community corrections populations has come at significant state expense. Alaska spent \$327 million on corrections in fiscal year 2014, up from \$184 million in 2005. In addition to these operating costs, recent corrections growth has also required significant capital expenditures, including the construction of the \$240 million Goose Creek Correctional Center, which opened in 2012.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the state's growing prison population and increased corrections spending have failed to produce commensurate improvements in public safety: nearly two out of every three offenders released from Alaska correctional facilities return within three years.

Without a shift in sentencing and corrections policy, Alaska's average daily prison population is projected to grow by another 1,416 inmates over the next decade. (See figure 1, next page.) These additional inmates will surpass the state's capacity to house them in 2017, requiring both the re-opening of a currently unused 128-bed facility and, once that facility has been filled, transferring inmates to private facilities out of state. If policy makers decide to keep all the state's inmates in Alaska, accommodating the projected prison population growth will necessitate building another facility or expanding existing facilities, costing the state significantly more in capital expenditures.

Figure 1.



Source: Alaska Department of Corrections

## Alaska Criminal Justice Commission

Seeking a comprehensive review of the state’s corrections and criminal justice systems, the 2014 Alaska Legislature passed Senate Bill 64, which established the bipartisan, inter-branch Alaska Criminal Justice Commission (“Commission”).

The Commission, comprised of 13 stakeholders including legislators, judges, law enforcement officials, the state’s Attorney General and Public Defender, the Corrections Commissioner, and members representing crime victims, Alaska Natives, and the Mental Health Trust Authority, was charged with conducting a comprehensive review of Alaska’s criminal justice system and providing recommendations for legislative and administrative action.

In April 2015, state leaders from all branches of government joined together to request technical assistance from the Public Safety Performance Project as part of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a collaboration between The Pew Charitable Trusts and the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance. Governor Bill Walker, former Chief Justice Dana Fabe, Senate President Kevin Meyer, House Speaker Mike Chenault, Attorney General Craig Richards, former Commissioner of the Alaska DOC Ron Taylor, and former Chair of the Commission Alexander O. Bryner tasked the Commission with “develop[ing] recommendations aimed at safely controlling prison and jail growth and recalibrating our correctional investments to ensure that we are achieving the best possible public safety return on our state dollars.”

Beginning in the summer of 2015 and extending through the end of the calendar year, the full Commission met seven times as a part of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative. To provide the opportunity for further analysis and discussion of specific policy areas, Commissioners also split into three subgroups focused on pretrial, sentencing, and community supervision policies.

Each subgroup's goal was to craft recommendations within their criminal justice policy area that would meet the Commission's charge. Subgroups reported their policy recommendations to the larger Commission for consideration.

Throughout the Justice Reinvestment process, the Commission and its staff heard from a wide range of stakeholders. It held five public hearings across the state, conducted outreach in rural hub communities and remote villages, and held roundtable discussions with victims, survivors, and victim advocates to identify key priorities. Members of the Commission and staff also received input and advice from prosecutors, defense attorneys, behavioral health experts, and other criminal justice stakeholders, and presented at annual convenings for judges, magistrates, law enforcement, the Prisoner Reentry Coalition, and the Alaska Federation of Natives.

## National Picture

Alaska's challenges with long-term prison growth are not unique. Across the country, state prison populations have expanded rapidly and state officials have spent an increasing share of taxpayer dollars to keep pace with soaring prison costs. From the mid-1980s to the mid-2000s, spending on corrections was the second fastest growing state budget category, behind only Medicaid.<sup>3</sup> In 2012, one in 14 state general fund dollars went to corrections.<sup>4</sup>

However, in recent years many states have taken steps to curb their prison population growth while holding public safety paramount. After 38 years of uninterrupted growth, the national prison population declined 3 percent between 2009 and 2014.<sup>5</sup>

Many of these states adopted policies to rein in the size and cost of their corrections systems through a "justice reinvestment" strategy. Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Utah, among many others, have implemented reforms to protect public safety and control corrections costs. These states revised their sentencing and corrections policies to focus state prison beds on violent and habitual offenders and then reinvested a portion of the savings from averted prison growth into more cost-effective strategies to reduce recidivism.

In 2011, for example, policymakers in Georgia faced a projected eight percent increase in the prison population over the next five years, at a cost of \$264 million. Rather than spend additional taxpayer dollars on prisons, Georgia leaders looked for more cost-effective solutions. The state legislature unanimously passed a set of reforms that controlled prison growth through changes to drug and property offense statutes, and improved public safety by investing in drug and mental health courts and treatment.<sup>6</sup> Between 2012 and 2014 (the most recent year with available crime data), the state crime rate has fallen three percent and the sentenced prison population has declined three percent, giving taxpayers better public safety at a lower cost.<sup>7</sup>

In these and other states, state working groups have focused on research that shows how to improve public safety and have integrated the perspectives of the three branches of government and key system stakeholders. This data-driven, inclusive process resulted in wide-ranging innovations to the laws and policies that govern who goes to prison, how long they stay, and whether they return.

## Key Findings of the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission

To evaluate Alaska's criminal justice system, the Commission reviewed the research on what works to change criminal offending behavior and safely reduce prison populations and then assessed Alaska's practices and policies against these standards. The Commission studied the criminal justice system in three areas – pretrial detention, post-conviction imprisonment, and community corrections.

### Pretrial Detention

The number of pretrial inmates in Alaska has grown by 81 percent over the past decade (up from 817 in 2005 to 1,479 in 2014), significantly outpacing the growth of the post-conviction population (up 14 percent from 2,303 in 2005 to 2,627 in 2014) and the growth in the supervision violation population (up 15 percent from 1,013 to 1,161). In 2005, pretrial inmates comprised 20 percent of the population; today they comprise 28 percent.

While criminologists have been studying post-conviction imprisonment and community corrections for many decades, publications on the pretrial phase of the criminal justice system were, until recently, focused almost exclusively on legal and constitutional questions rather than scientific ones. In the last decade, however, rigorous scientific research into the area of pretrial policy has expanded rapidly. Today, a growing body of literature supports the following three principles of pretrial policy.

#### *Pretrial risks can be predicted and used to guide release decisions*

In deciding whether to release a defendant pretrial, courts generally consider two factors: the likelihood that the defendant will miss their court hearings and the likelihood that the defendant will engage in new criminal activity if released.<sup>8</sup> Research has shown that risk assessment tools can accurately predict these risks by identifying and weighing factors that are associated with each type of pretrial failure.<sup>9</sup>

Research also supports the use of these assessments in guiding decisions about conditions of release. Targeted use of pretrial conditions is critical because restrictive release conditions such as electronic monitoring and drug and alcohol testing do not improve outcomes for all pretrial defendants. While select restrictive release conditions can decrease the likelihood of pretrial failure (measured as failure to appear or bail revocation due to new arrest) for higher risk defendants, when restrictive conditions are applied to lower risk defendants, they can actually do the opposite. Compared to similar defendants not assigned these restrictive release conditions,



lower risk defendants with restrictive release conditions are more likely to fail during their pretrial release period.<sup>10</sup>

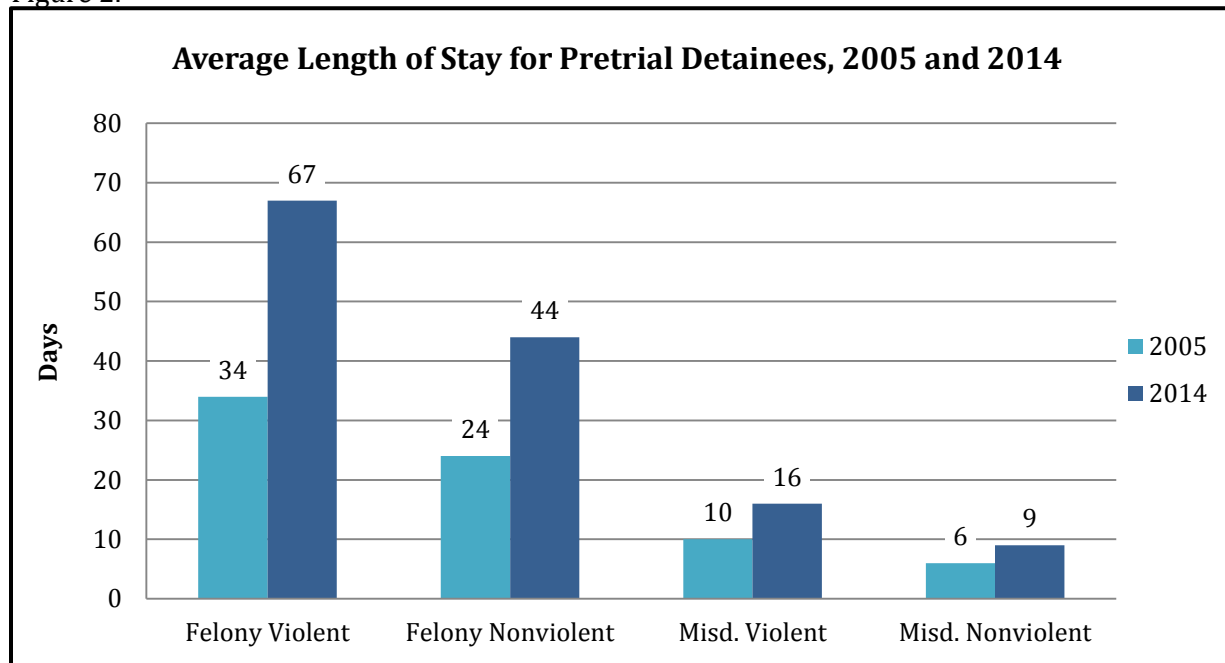
In Alaska, courts do not currently utilize pretrial risk assessments to guide their decisions about release or conditions of release, so, in the absence of data, it is not possible to determine whether those who are detained pretrial or released under restrictive conditions are in fact higher risk.

*Pretrial detention longer than 24 hours can lead to worse outcomes, particularly for low risk defendants*

Researchers have also examined the impacts of pretrial detention on defendants' outcomes. In a recent examination of this relationship, researchers matched defendants with similar criminal charges, risk levels, and demographic characteristics who were detained pretrial for different lengths of time. A key finding of this study was that, generally, low risk defendants who are detained for more than 24 hours experience an increased likelihood of failure to appear and new criminal activity during the pretrial period.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the study demonstrated that being detained for the entirety of the pretrial period is associated with an increased likelihood of new criminal activity post-disposition across all risk categories.<sup>12</sup>

In Alaska, pretrial inmates are staying behind bars longer before being released than they were 10 years ago – increases that have occurred across charge severity. (See figure 2.) For example, in 2014, detainees whose most serious charge was a nonviolent misdemeanor were staying an average of nine days during the pretrial period – three days longer than the average stay in 2005.

Figure 2.



Source: Alaska Department of Corrections

### *Unsecured bail is as effective as secured bail*

Across the country, length of pretrial detention is often tied to whether a defendant can afford to pay monetary bail. While this is a common practice in the United States, it does not have a foundation in the growing body of research on pretrial risk. Ability to pay monetary bail does not make a person low risk.<sup>13</sup> There are defendants who cannot afford monetary bail who are unlikely to engage in new criminal activity during the pretrial period. Additionally, there are defendants who can afford to pay their monetary bail, but who are likely to engage in new criminal activity. For these reasons, monetary bail is not the most effective tool for protecting the public during the pretrial period.

Research supports the use of unsecured monetary bail and other release conditions in place of secured monetary bail to reduce length of pretrial detention. (Secured bail requires payment of money upfront to be released, while unsecured bail permits release without payment and only requires payment if the defendant does not comply with their release conditions). Research has shown that defendants are as likely to make their court appearances and refrain from new criminal activity whether their bail is secured or unsecured, compared to defendants with similar risk levels.<sup>14</sup> However, use of secured bail results in many more jail beds than use of unsecured bail, as defendants who are unable to post the monetary amount upfront remain detained.<sup>15</sup>

One of the likely contributors to pretrial length of stay in Alaska is the use of secured money bail. While there is a statutory presumption that defendants will be released on personal recognizance or unsecured bail, a court file review of bail conditions for a random sample of offenders found that courts departed from this presumption in the vast majority of cases.<sup>16</sup> Only 12 percent of defendants in the sample were released on personal recognizance, and an additional 10 percent had unsecured money bail. Fifty-two percent of sampled defendants were never released prior to their case being resolved.

The case file review also revealed a connection between higher dollar bail amounts and release. Fewer than half of the defendants sampled were released at all during the pretrial period, and those with higher amounts of secured money bail were less likely to be released. Of those who were released, those with higher money bail spent longer in jail prior to their first release. For offenders whose bail was set at \$1,000 or more, for example, those who were eventually able to secure their release spent an average of seven weeks detained pretrial prior to release.

## **Post-Conviction Imprisonment**

Alaska's sentenced prison population, defined as those offenders sentenced to a period of incarceration for a new criminal conviction, has grown by 14 percent in the last decade. Additionally, the number of offenders in prison for a violation of supervision (both pre-hearing and post-revocation) grew 15 percent over the same period.

The relationship between crime and incarceration has been studied for many years. While experts differ on precise figures, researchers have found that increased incarceration in the 1990s was responsible for between 10 and 30 percent of the nationwide crime decline in that decade.<sup>17</sup>

Beyond the crime control benefit, prison sentences can be used to express community condemnation or to isolate the offender.

However, there is general consensus among experts that, as states have incarcerated higher numbers of lower-level offenders, and held offenders for longer periods of time, the country has passed the point of diminishing returns, meaning that additional use of prison would have little if any crime reduction effect today.<sup>18</sup> On the individual offender level, the evidence suggests that, for many offenders, incarceration is not more effective at reducing recidivism than non-custodial sanctions. At the same time, for a substantial number of offenders, there is little or no evidence that longer prison stays reduce recidivism more than shorter prison stays.<sup>19</sup>

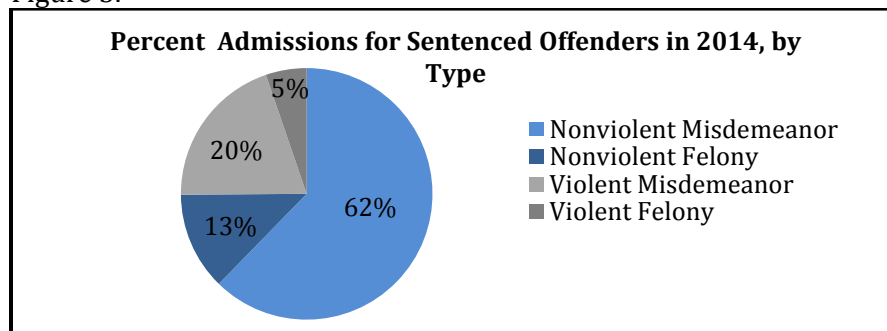
*For many offenders, incarceration is not more effective at reducing recidivism than non-custodial sanctions*

The Commission first considered the value of sending offenders to prison relative to non-custodial sanctions – such as drug court, probation, or electronic monitoring. Researchers have examined this question by matching samples of offenders sent to prison with those sent to non-custodial sanctions and have consistently found no differences in re-arrest or re-conviction rates, both in short-term and in long-term analyses, even when controlling for individuals’ education, employment, drug abuse status, and current offense.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, there is a growing body of research showing that for many low-level offenders, prison terms may increase rather than reduce recidivism.<sup>21</sup> Research around the “schools of crime” theory suggests that for many types of nonviolent offenders, the negative impacts of incarceration outweigh the positive: that is, sending offenders to prison can cause them to commit more crimes upon release.<sup>22</sup>

In examining the use of incarceration as a post-conviction sanction in Alaska, the Commission focused closely on the number of offenders entering prison for nonviolent offenses. Over the last 10 years, the number of nonviolent felony admissions has increased and, in 2014, nonviolent offenses (misdemeanors and felonies) comprised three-quarters of all post-conviction admissions to prison. (See figure 3.)

Figure 3.



Source: Alaska Department of Corrections

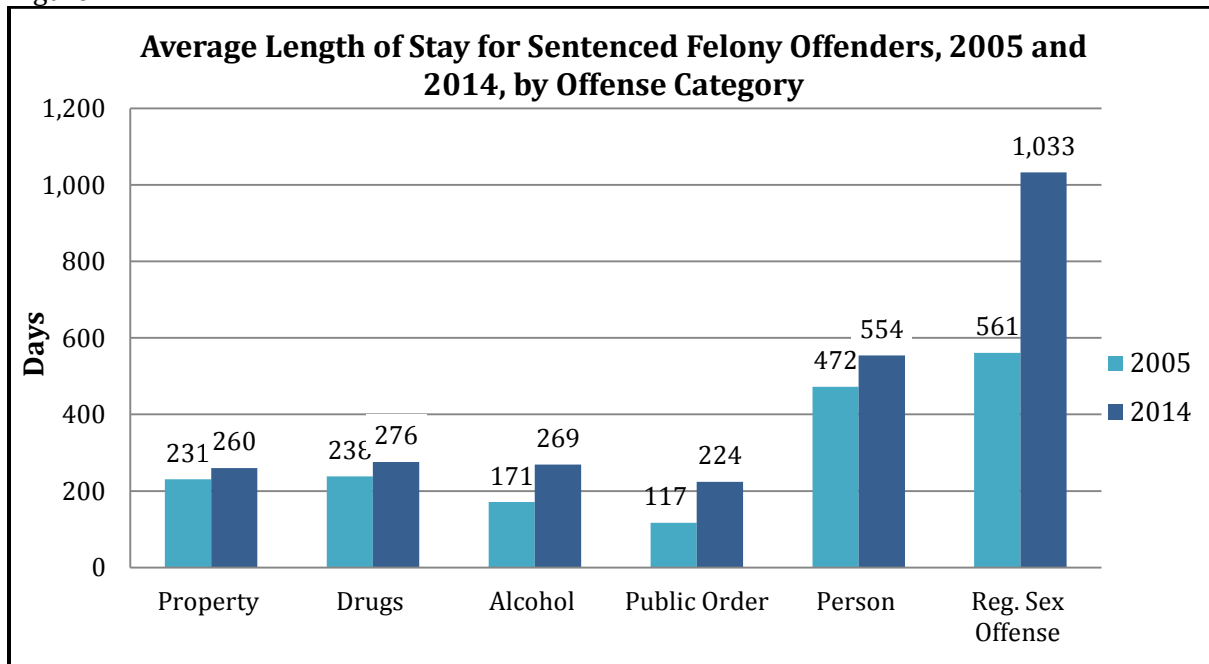
Additionally, the Commission examined the growing number of inmates in Alaska entering prison not for a new conviction but for a technical violation of their probation or parole conditions, defined as a violation of their supervision conditions that does not rise to the level of new criminal conduct. These offenders are admitted for failing to comply with the terms of their supervision, such as missing or failing a drug test or failing to report to their supervision officer. The number of offenders sentenced to prison after being revoked for a technical violation grew 32 percent in the past 10 years.

*Longer prison stays do not reduce recidivism more than shorter prison stays*

The Commission also considered the relationship between the length of prison terms and recidivism. The best measurement for whether longer lengths of stay provide for greater deterrence is whether similar offenders, when subjected to different terms of incarceration, recidivate at different levels. The rigorous research studies find no significant effect, positive or negative, of longer prison terms on recidivism rates.<sup>23</sup>

Examining length of stay in Alaska presents a mixed picture: while average misdemeanor length of stay is down slightly over the last 10 years, felony length of stay is up across all offense types and felony classes. For some offense types, including drug and property offenders, length of stay has increased by roughly 30 days over the last decade. For others, including felony public order and sex offenders, length of stay has nearly doubled, leading to an additional 3 ½ months in prison on average for public order convictions and an additional 16 months in prison on average for felony sex offenders.<sup>24</sup> (See figure 4.)

Figure 4.

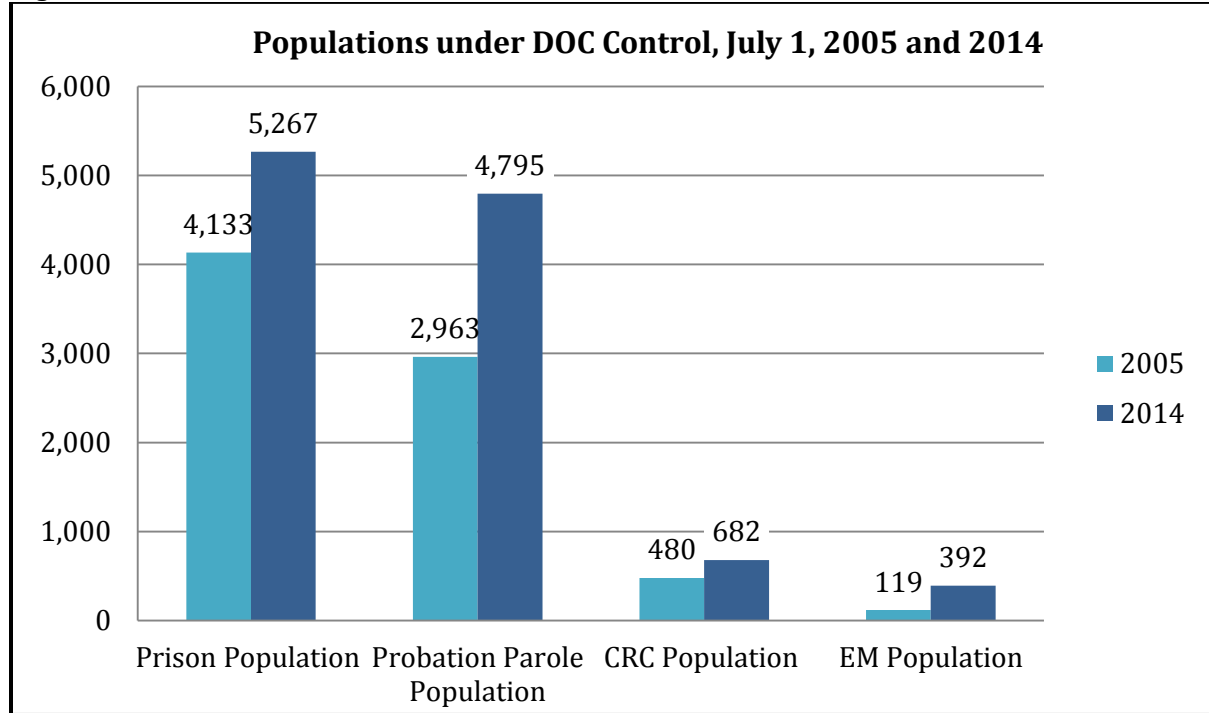


Source: Alaska Department of Corrections

## Community Corrections

While Alaska’s prison population has grown by 27 percent over the last decade, the state has experienced more growth among its community corrections populations, including probation and parole (up 62 percent), community residential centers or halfway houses (“CRCs”) (up 42 percent), and electronic monitoring (“EM”) (up 229 percent). (See figure 5.)

Figure 5.



Source: Alaska Department of Corrections

Research has identified a number of key strategies to increase success rates for those supervised in the community, including identifying and focusing resources on higher risk offenders, using swift, certain, and proportionate sanctions, incorporating rewards and incentives, frontloading resources in the first weeks and months following release from prison, and integrating treatment into supervision, rather than relying on surveillance alone.

### *Identify and focus supervision resources on high risk offenders*

Research has consistently shown that offenders’ likelihood to recidivate – that is, to commit new crimes upon release – can be accurately predicted with the use of validated risk assessment tools.<sup>25</sup> With these tools, supervision agents can focus their oversight and resources on those who pose the highest risk of reoffending, a practice that provides the biggest return on investment.

While Alaska currently utilizes a risk and needs assessment tool, the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (“LSI-R”), to inform supervision levels, a sizeable portion of the state’s community

supervision resources remain focused on low risk offenders. On July 1, 2014, 39 percent of the state's probation and parole supervised population was classified as low risk. Even with reduced reporting requirements, these low risk offenders make up a large share of caseloads and require staff resources that could otherwise be dedicated to offenders with a higher likelihood to reoffend.

### *Use swift, certain, and proportionate sanctions*

Research has also demonstrated that offenders are more responsive to sanctions that are swift, certain, and proportionate rather than those that are delayed, inconsistently applied, and severe.<sup>26</sup> Swift and proportionate sanctions work both because they help offenders see the sanction as a consequence of their behavior rather than a decision levied upon them, and because offenders heavily weigh the present over the future (consequences that come months and years later are steeply discounted). Certainty establishes a credible and consistent threat – thereby creating a clear deterrent for non-compliant behavior.<sup>27</sup>

In Alaska, with the implementation of the Probation Accountability with Certain Enforcement (“PACE”) program in 2010, the state has begun utilizing evidence-based jail sanctions for a small portion of offenders on community supervision (offenders deemed high risk in five pilot communities). However, data across the entire supervision violator population – PACE and non-PACE – point to long delays between the problem behavior and the consequence – with an average of 33 days to resolve a revocation charge – and many offenders serving long sentences once convicted. In 2014, nearly half of revoked supervision violators stayed more than 30 days, and 28 percent stayed longer than 3 months behind bars.

Moreover, Alaska lacks a system-wide framework for the use of swift, certain, and proportionate sanctions that do not rise to the level of additional prison time. States across the country have successfully implemented graduated sanctioning, whereby supervision officers can respond to non-compliant behavior with a range of non-custodial responses – from less intensive sanctions like increased reporting requirements or community service hours, to more intensive sanctions like electronic monitoring.

### *Incorporate rewards and incentives*

Historically, probation and parole supervision was focused on surveillance and sanctioning in order to catch or interrupt negative behavior. However, research shows that encouraging positive behavior with incentives and rewards can have an even greater effect on motivating and sustaining behavior change.<sup>28</sup>

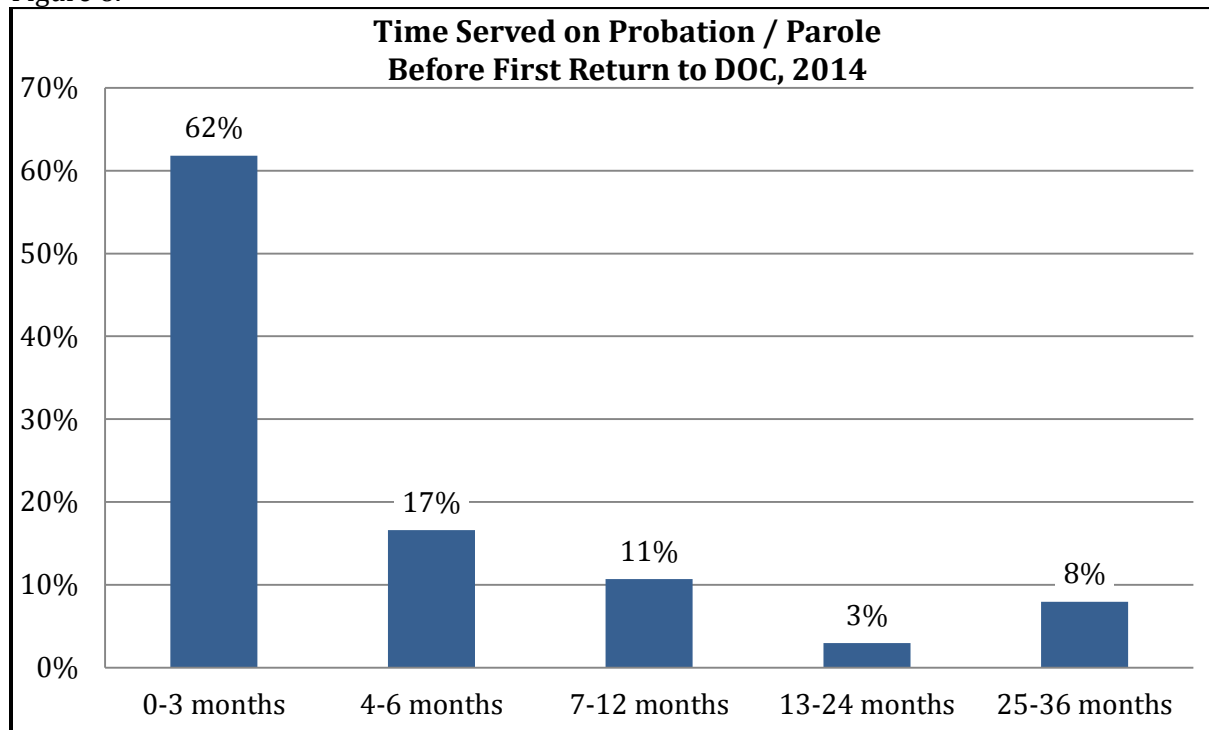
While incarcerated offenders in Alaska have the opportunity to receive good time and furlough incentives in acknowledgement of positive behavior and program participation, the state provides no similar incentives for offenders under supervision. Alaska has no earned discharge policy to allow supervisees to earn time off their supervision sentence for good behavior. Additionally, there is currently no standard practice for probation and parole officers to terminate supervision for offenders who have been consistently compliant. Rather, applications to terminate supervision must be made before a court and on an individual basis.

### *Frontload resources in the first weeks and months following release*

Long-term success for offenders returning home from prison is closely tied to accountability and support in the time period immediately following release. Offenders in Alaska and elsewhere are most likely to reoffend or violate the terms of their community supervision in the initial days, weeks, and months after release from prison. (See figure 6.) The likelihood of violations and the value of ongoing supervision diminish as offenders gain stability and demonstrate longer-term success in the community.<sup>29</sup>

Research has shown that supervision resources have the highest impact when they target this critical period. By frontloading limited resources, states can better target offenders at the time when they are most likely to reoffend, thereby reducing future violations by addressing non-compliant offender behavior early in the process.<sup>30</sup>

Figure 6.



Source: Alaska Department of Corrections

While Alaska has taken significant strides in recent years to support offenders as they reenter the community, the state lacks policies to concentrate supervision resources on those first critical months. Moreover, while offenders are far more likely to fail in the first three months after release, the average length of time spent on community supervision prior to successful discharge has grown by 13 percent in the last decade, meaning that more parole and probation resources are dedicated to supervising offenders beyond the period when they pose the highest risk.

### *Integrate treatment into surveillance*

Lastly, research shows that a combination of surveillance and treatment focused on offenders' criminogenic needs (changeable risk factors that increase an offender's likelihood of committing a crime, such as anti-social behavior and substance abuse) is more effective at reducing recidivism than supervision consisting of surveillance alone.<sup>31</sup>

In Alaska, probation and parole officers currently use risk assessments to both inform offenders' supervision levels (as outlined earlier), as well as to identify supervisees' criminogenic needs with top priority needs forming the basis of case management plans. However, the Commission heard a number of anecdotal reports regarding insufficient inpatient and outpatient treatment beds in DOC institutions and CRCs, as well as regional disparities in the availability of community-based treatment and programming, that render accessing evidence-based treatment difficult for many offenders.

## Policy Recommendations

On September 8, 2015, Senate President Kevin Meyer and Speaker of the House Mike Chenault made an additional request of the Commission. Noting that the state's difficult budget situation rendered reinvestment in programs and treatment only possible with significant reforms, they charged the Commission with delivering policy options that met three benchmarks: (1) averting all future growth, (2) averting all future growth and reducing the prison population by 15 percent, and (3) averting all future growth and reducing the prison population by 25 percent. In a separate letter, Governor Walker applauded the legislative leadership for taking this initiative and pledged to use the benchmarks in developing reinvestment priorities in his budget.

Based on the Commission's review of evidence-based practices and an evaluation of the state's alignment with those practices in the areas of pretrial detention, post-conviction imprisonment, and community corrections, the Commission came to consensus on 21 policy recommendations that, taken together, are projected to reduce the average daily prison population by 21 percent by 2024, achieving an estimated net savings to the state of \$424 million over the next decade.

These 21 consensus recommendations will:

- Implement evidence-based pretrial practices;
- Focus prison beds on serious and violent offenders;
- Strengthen supervision and interventions to reduce recidivism;
- Ensure oversight and accountability; and
- Advance crime victim priorities.

In an acknowledgement of the state's rapid prison growth over the last decade, and the importance of reinvesting savings into programs and policies that will reduce victimization and the state's recidivism rate, the Commission decided not to forward recommendations to the legislature that met the first two benchmarks: averting all future growth, and averting all future growth and reducing the prison population by 15 percent. Instead, the Commission strongly encourages the legislature to consider the 21 consensus recommendations forwarded and, where savings are achieved, to reinvest a portion into pretrial supervision services, victims' services in remote and



bush communities, violence prevention, reentry support services, and institutional and community-based treatment in both rural and urban areas.

## Commission's Consensus Recommendations

### *Implement evidence-based pretrial practices*

#### **Recommendation 1: Expand the use of citations in place of arrest for lower-level nonviolent offenses**

The majority of admissions to prison pretrial are for defendants with nonviolent misdemeanor charges. While law enforcement officers have discretion to issue citations for these offenses, the large number of admissions suggests that officers are not using that discretion as often as they could to ensure that expensive prison beds during the pretrial period are occupied those facing serious charges.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To reduce pretrial admissions for defendants with lower-level nonviolent charges, the Commission recommends:

- a. Creating a presumption of citation for misdemeanors and class C felonies, excluding person offenses, domestic violence offenses, violations of release conditions, or offenses for which a warrant or summons has been ordered.
- b. Allowing law enforcement officials to overcome the presumption of citation if the officer has reasonable grounds to believe the person presents a significant likelihood of flight, presents a significant danger to the victim or the public, or if the officer is unable to verify the person's identification without making an arrest.

#### **Recommendation 2: Utilize risk-based release decision-making**

A review of a sample of Alaska court files found that courts ordered some amount of secured monetary bond (as opposed to personal recognizance or unsecured bond) in a majority of cases. Additionally, 52 percent of sampled defendants were detained for the entirety of their pretrial period. Therefore, whether a defendant is released pretrial in Alaska is often tied to his or her ability to pay a certain amount of secured money bail rather than his or her likelihood of failing to appear for court hearings or engaging in new criminal activity.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To implement pretrial release decision-making based upon the offender's risk level, instead of ability to pay monetary bond, the Commission recommends:

- a. Directing the DOC, in consultation with the Department of Law ("DOL"), Public Defender, Department of Public Safety ("DPS"), and Alaska Court System ("ACS"), to create an evidence-based pretrial release decision-making grid that strengthens the presumption of release on personal recognizance or unsecured bond for defendants with less serious charges and lower risk scores. The statutory parameters for this grid would include:
  - i. Defining a category of defendants who, as a matter of law, should always be released on personal recognizance or unsecured bond with appropriate release conditions; and

- ii. Defining categories of defendants for whom DOC should always or usually recommend release on personal recognizance or unsecured bond with appropriate release conditions, while providing a mechanism for the court to depart from that recommendation in limited circumstances.<sup>32</sup>

The following grid captures the release categories as recommended by the Commission:

Offense Type	Misd. non-person offense (non-DV/ non-DUI)	Class C felony non-person offense (non-DV/ non-DUI)	DUI	Failure to appear/ violation of release condition	Other
Low-risk	OR or UB release	OR or UB release	OR or UB recommended	OR or UB usually recommended	OR or UB usually recommended
Moderate-risk	OR or UB release	OR or UB recommended	OR or UB recommended	OR or UB usually recommended	OR or UB not usually recommended
High-risk	OR or UB recommended	OR or UB recommended	OR or UB usually recommended	OR or UB not usually recommended	OR or UB not usually recommended

OR: Own recognizance.

UB: Unsecured bond.

- b. Mandating that DOC assess all pretrial defendants for risk using a validated pretrial risk assessment tool and make release recommendations to the court based on the grid prior to the defendant's first appearance. All releases on personal recognizance or unsecured bond would be accompanied by release conditions and, when appropriate, varying levels of pretrial supervision.
- i. Absent compelling circumstances, all defendants should be seen for their first appearance within 24 hours. If a first appearance happens within 24 hours, DOL is not required to be present. The court shall notify DOL if an additional probable cause hearing within 48 hours is required.
- c. Authorizing courts to consider a defendant's inability to pay a previously set secured money bond in at least one bail review hearing.
- d. Authorizing courts to issue unsecured and partially-secured performance bonds.<sup>33</sup>
- e. Authorizing the DOL collections unit to garnish paychecks and Permanent Fund Dividend checks to collect on forfeited unsecured bonds and unpaid victim restitution.
- f. Directing the ACS to eliminate misdemeanor bail schedules following DOC's implementation of the above evidence-based pretrial practices. Thereafter, any defendant arrested by law enforcement would remain detained until they have received a risk assessment and have made their first appearance before a judicial officer.

### **Recommendation 3: Implement meaningful pretrial supervision**

Currently, judges have few options for pretrial supervision, and the options that are available are typically handled by non-state agencies and contingent upon the defendant's ability to pay monitoring fees, including the ordering of a private third-party custodian, the services of a private electronic-monitoring company, and the 24/7 sobriety program. The Commission heard from many judges and magistrates who said they would release more defendants from jail pretrial if there were more options for meaningful supervision in the community to reduce the defendants' risk of committing new crimes or failing to appear for court.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To reduce the risk that released defendants will fail to appear or engage in new criminal activity, the Commission recommends:

- a. Directing the DOC to provide varying levels of supervision for moderate- and high-risk defendants who are released pretrial. The DOC would also be responsible for standardizing and recommending the use of pretrial diversion, conducting outreach to community programs and tribal courts to develop and expand diversion options, and providing referral services on a voluntary basis for substance abuse and behavioral health treatment services.
- b. Directing the ACS to issue court date reminders to criminal defendants for each of their hearings, and to coordinate and share information about hearing dates and times with the DOC.

#### **Recommendation 4: Focus supervision resources on high-risk defendants**

Research shows that pretrial supervision resources should be focused on those defendants who are the most likely to fail. Certain restrictive release conditions can improve success rates for higher-risk defendants, but result in worse outcomes for lower-risk defendants.<sup>34</sup> Courts in Alaska currently do not utilize actuarial risk assessment tools or have guidance for assigning release conditions based in part on risk scores.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To ensure that supervision resources are focused on defendants at the highest risk to reoffend, the Commission recommends:

- a. Ensuring that the DOC recommends evidence-based release conditions for each defendant who they have recommended for pretrial release, with more restrictive conditions reserved for higher-risk defendants.
  - i. Additionally, entitling defendants to a subsequent bail hearing in cases where the release conditions prevented the defendant's release. At the bail hearing, the court would either revise the conditions or find on the record that there is clear and convincing evidence that no other release conditions can reasonably assure court appearance and public safety.
- b. Restricting third-party custodian conditions to only those cases in which pretrial supervision provided by the DOC is not available; when no secured money bond is ordered; and when the court finds on the record that there is clear and convincing evidence that no less restrictive release conditions can reasonably assure court appearance and public safety.
- c. Revising eligibility requirements for third-party custodians to limit disqualification from serving as a third-party custodian if there is a reasonable possibility that the prosecution will call them as a witness.<sup>35</sup>

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## *Focus prison beds on serious and violent offenders*

### **Recommendation 5: Limit the use of prison for lower-level misdemeanor offenders**

In 2014, 6,569 offenders were admitted for a period of incarceration for a nonviolent misdemeanor offense, and an additional 2,093 offenders were admitted to prison for a violent misdemeanor – constituting 82 percent of all admissions to prison in that year.

*Specific Action Recommended:* In accordance with the research on the null or mildly criminogenic effect of prison stays for many lower-level offenders, and the Commission’s desire to redirect a greater percentage of lower-level misdemeanor offenders to alternatives such as fines, probation, and electronic monitoring, the Commission recommends:

- a. Reclassifying the following misdemeanors as violations, punishable by up to \$1,000 fine:
  - i. Misdemeanor B offenses, the lowest-level misdemeanor class in terms of severity, excluding theft and disorderly conduct violations;
  - ii. Driving with a suspended license (“DWLS”) offenses, when the underlying license suspension was not related to a conviction for driving under the influence (“DUI”) or refusal to submit to a chemical test; and
  - iii. Violations of conditions of release (“VCOR”) and failure to appear (“FTA”) offenses, with certain exclusions.<sup>36</sup> For these pretrial violations, law enforcement will be authorized to arrest the defendant, and the DOC will be authorized to detain the defendant until the court schedules a bail review hearing.
- b. Reclassifying disorderly conduct offenses in such a way that allows for an arrest but limits jail holds or terms up to 24 hours.
- c. Reclassifying first- and second-time theft offenses under \$250 as non-jailable misdemeanors, and limiting the maximum sentence for a third or subsequent theft offense under \$250 to five days suspended and a six-month probation term.
- d. Eliminating the mandatory minimum for first-time DUI-related DWLS offenses.
- e. Requiring that first-time misdemeanor DUI and refusal to submit to chemical test offenders serve their incarceration sentences on electronic monitoring in the community; in cases where electronic monitoring is not available, assigning the offenders to serve their incarceration sentence on supervised probation.
- f. Presumptively setting a zero to thirty day sentencing range for misdemeanor A’s.
  - i. Permitting courts to depart from the presumptive sentencing range for DV-related assault 4s if the prosecution demonstrates that the conduct was among the most serious constituting the offense or if the offender has past similar and repeated criminal history (not limited to convictions).
  - ii. Permitting courts to depart from the presumptive sentencing range for all other misdemeanor A’s if the prosecution demonstrates that the conduct was among the most

serious constituting the offense or if the offender had past similar criminal convictions.

- g. Restricting municipalities from incarcerating past these limits for similar municipal offenses.

**Recommendation 6: Revise drug penalties to focus the most severe punishments on higher-level drug offenders**

Over the past 10 years, post-conviction admissions to prison for drug offenses have grown by 35 percent. In addition, felony drug offenders are spending 16 percent longer behind bars than they were a decade ago.

In addition to reviewing meta-analyses demonstrating that longer prison stays do not reduce recidivism more than shorter prison stays for many offenders, the Commission also reviewed research pointing to the low deterrent value of long prison terms for drug offenders. Research shows that the chances of a typical street-level drug transaction being detected are about 1 in 15,000.<sup>37</sup> With such a low risk of detection, drug offenders are unlikely to be dissuaded by the remote possibility of a longer stay in prison.

*Specific Action Recommended:* In accordance with the research on the limited recidivism-reduction benefit of longer stays in prison, as well as the low deterrent value of long drug sentences in particular, the Commission recommends:

- a. Reclassifying simple possession of heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine as a misdemeanor offense, and limiting the maximum penalty for first- and second-time possession offenses to one month and six month suspended sentences, respectively.<sup>38</sup>
- b. Aligning penalties for commercial heroin offenses with penalties for commercial methamphetamine and cocaine offenses.<sup>39</sup> This recommendation shall be forwarded to the Controlled Substances Advisory Committee (“CSAC”) and CSAC shall be provided with the opportunity to comment and carry out their duties under AS 11.71.110.
- c. Creating a tiered commercial drug statute whereby offenses related to more than 2.5g of heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine is a more serious offense (Felony B) than offenses related to less than 2.5g of heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine (Felony C).<sup>40</sup>

**Recommendation 7: Utilize inflation-adjusted property thresholds**

Alaska’s felony property offense threshold, the dividing line at which the vast majority of property crimes are categorized as felonies as opposed to misdemeanors, was originally set at \$500 in 1978. The equivalent value in today’s dollars would be over \$1800. However, the state’s threshold today is set at \$750, having been raised from \$500 in 2014.

In a recent examination of felony cut-off points, findings showed that increasing a felony theft threshold does not lead to higher property crime rates. Between 2001 and 2011, 23 states raised their felony theft thresholds. The analysis found that the change in threshold had no statistically significant impact, up or down, in the states’ overall property crime or larceny rates. Additionally,

the study found no correlation between the amount of a state's felony theft threshold – whether it is \$500, \$1,000, or \$2,000 – and its property crime rates.<sup>41</sup>

*Specific Action Recommended:* To focus costly prison space on more serious offenders, and to ensure that value-based penalties take inflation into account, the Commission recommends:

- a. Raising the felony property crime threshold to \$2,000 for all property crimes with a required value amount.<sup>42</sup>
- b. Requiring the Department of Labor to set in regulation an inflation-adjusted felony property threshold, as well as an inflation-adjusted threshold dividing Misdemeanor A and B property crimes (currently set at \$250), every 5 years, rounded up to the nearest \$50 increment.

### **Recommendation 8: Align non-sex felony presumptive ranges with prior presumptive terms**

In 2005, following the Supreme Court Case *Blakely v. Washington*, Alaska moved from a statutory framework with presumptive prison terms to one utilizing presumptive ranges. In designing these ranges, lawmakers used the prior presumptive term as the bottom of the presumptive range. For example, in establishing the presumptive range for a non-sex, first-time Class A Felony, the prior presumptive term – 5 years – was used as the bottom of the new presumptive range – set at 5 to 8 years. (See chart below.)

Lawmakers had sought to maintain the status quo in regard to sentence lengths, noting in the legislation that, “it is not the intent [...] to bring about an overall increase in the amount of active imprisonment time.”<sup>43</sup> However, since the shift to presumptive ranges, length of stay has increased across all non-sex felony classes: including an 80 percent increase for Class A Felonies, an 8 percent increase for Class B Felonies, and a 17 percent increase for Class C Felonies.<sup>44</sup>

*Specific Action Recommended:* In accordance with the research demonstrating that for many offenders longer prison stays do not reduce recidivism more than shorter prison stays, and the original legislative intent to maintain lengths of prison stays at 2005 levels, the Commission recommends aligning presumptive ranges with the prior presumptive terms as outlined below.

*(Numbers in brackets indicate presumptive terms/ranges.)*

Felony Class <sup>45</sup>	Presumptive Term (2005)	Alaska Current	Recommendation
<b>Class A</b>			
First	[5] – 20 years	[5 – 8] – 20 years	[3 – 6] – 20 years
First/Enhanced <sup>46</sup>	[7] – 20 years	[7 – 11] – 20 years	[5 – 9] – 20 years
Second	[10] – 20 years	[10 – 14] – 20 years	[8 – 12] – 20 years
Third	[15] – 20 years	15 – 20 years	13 – 20 years
<b>Class B</b>			
First	[n/a] – 10 years	[1 – 3] – 10 years	[0 – 2] – 10 years
First/Enhanced <sup>47</sup>	[n/a] – 10 years	[2 – 4] – 10 years	[1 – 3] – 10 years
Second	[4] – 10 years	[4 – 7] – 10 years	[2 – 5] – 10 years
Third	[6] – 10 years	6 – 10 years	4 – 10 years
<b>Class C</b>			
First	[n/a] – 5 years	[0 – 2] – 5 years	Presumptive probation;

			0 – 18 months <sup>48</sup>
Second	[2] – 5 years	[2 – 4] – 5 years	[1 – 3] – 5 years
Third	[3] – 5 years	3 – 5 years	2 – 5 years

### **Recommendation 9: Expand and streamline the use of discretionary parole**

Current eligibility for discretionary parole is restricted to those non-sex offense felons convicted of the most serious crimes (Unclassified Felonies), and felonies towards the bottom of the severity scale (first- and second-time Class C Felonies, as well as first-time Class B Felonies). Offenders who fall between these two poles are ineligible for discretionary parole without the intervention of the three-judge panel. Additionally, no offenders convicted of a felony sex offense are able to apply for discretionary parole without the intervention of the three-judge panel.

Moreover, a review of DOC files found that, although a substantial number of offenders currently serving time in prison are eligible for discretionary parole, only a small percentage are applying and appearing before the Parole Board. Commissioners heard from numerous sources that this low percentage was attributable to a cumbersome application and review process.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To increase the number of offenders who are eligible to apply for parole, as well as to streamline the decision-making process, the Commission recommends:

- a. Expanding eligibility for discretionary parole to all offenders except Class A or Unclassified sex offenders with prior felony convictions.
- b. Streamlining parole decision-making for lower-level felonies (first time Felony C and B offenders) by restricting hearings to only those offenders who have failed to comply with their individual case plan or who have been disciplined for failure to obey institutional rules, or in cases where the victim has requested a parole hearing. Otherwise, inmates will be paroled at their earliest eligibility date.
- c. Requiring that any other offender who is eligible for parole receives a hearing at least 90 days before his or her first eligibility date, with the presumption that the offender will be granted parole if he or she has complied with the Individual Case Plan and followed institutional rules. The presumption of parole could be overcome with a finding on the record that release would jeopardize public safety

### **Recommendation 10: Implement a specialty parole option for long-term, geriatric inmates**

Geriatric prisoners are often much more expensive than younger inmates because of their higher medical costs. At the same time, research shows that older inmates are at a much lower risk of recidivism than younger inmates because they typically have “aged out” of their crime committing years. According to research by the Alaska Judicial Council, offenders released at age 55 and older were far less likely to be rearrested than the average for all offenders.<sup>49</sup>

*Specific Action Recommended:* To reduce the number of low risk, geriatric offenders in prison, the Commission recommends:

- a. Providing for automatic parole hearings for offenders, including those incarcerated prior to the implementation of the legislation, who are over an age threshold set between 55 and 60 and have served at least 10 years of their sentence.
- b. Ensuring that when evaluating inmates under this policy, the Parole Board considers the inmate's likelihood of re-offending in light of his or her age, as well as criminal history, behavior in prison, participation in treatment, and plans for reentering the community.

**Recommendation 11: Incentivize completion of treatment for sex offenders with an earned time policy**

The Commission also reviewed research relating to the efficacy of sex offender treatment. Over the last decade, a growing body of evidence has demonstrated that treatment interventions for sex offenders can be successful. A cost-benefit analysis conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that in-prison sex offender treatment had a positive cost-benefit ratio of \$1.87 (i.e. for every dollar spent on treatment, there was \$1.87 returned in benefits to the state and state residents).<sup>50</sup>

Many states utilize earned time to motivate offenders to complete treatment rehabilitation activities – whereby inmate prison terms are reduced from the date on which they might have been released had they not completed the specified programs.<sup>51</sup> Earned time is distinguished from “good time” credits (often referred to in Alaska as “mandatory parole”), which are awarded to offenders exclusively for following prison rules.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To incentivize participation in and completion of sex offender treatment, the Commission recommends:

- a. Implementing an earned time policy for sex offenders who are currently ineligible for mandatory parole, whereby offenders are able to earn up to one-third off their sentence if they complete in-prison treatment requirements set forth by the DOC.
- b. Expanding the DOC's capacity to provide residential, long-term sex offender treatment that focuses on ensuring the offender is held responsible for harmful behavior and teaches cognitive behavioral strategies to end patterns of abuse.

***Strengthen supervision and interventions to reduce recidivism***

**Recommendation 12: Implement graduated sanctions and incentives**

Alaska law does not authorize community supervision field officers to respond to technical violations of community supervision, such as missing drug tests or treatment sessions, with intermediate sanctions. Although DOC policies do give field officers the authority to address minor violations administratively, there is no system-wide framework for the use of swift, certain, and proportionate sanctions. As a result, sanctioning practices vary widely across the state.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To reduce recidivism and increase success rates on probation and



parole through the use of swift, certain, and proportional sanctions and incentives, the Commission recommends:

- a. Statutorily authorizing the DOC to create a graduated sanctions and incentives matrix using swift, certain, and proportional responses, and to follow the matrix both when rewarding pro-social behavior and when responding to technical violations of supervision.
- b. Requiring field agents to be trained on principles of effective intervention, case management, and the use of sanctions and rewards.

**Recommendation 13: Reduce pre-adjudication length of stay and cap overall incarceration time for technical violations of supervision**

On July 1, 2014, 22 percent of Alaska’s prison population was comprised of offenders who have violated the terms of their probation or parole supervision. Of those, most have violated the rules of supervision that do not constitute new criminal conduct, such as failing drug screenings or failing to report to their probation or parole officer.

After revocation, supervision violators are staying incarcerated, on average, for 106 days. Many of these supervision violators also spend a significant amount of time incarcerated before their case is resolved – on average, approximately one month. However, research shows – and Alaska’s experiences with the PACE program have demonstrated – that more proportionate sanctions, administered in a swift and certain fashion have a stronger deterrent effect than these less swift and more severe sanctions.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To respond swiftly and proportionately to violations of supervision and to limit the use of prison as a sanction for technical violations, the Commission recommends:

- a. For offenders not participating in the PACE program, limiting revocations to prison as a potential sanction for technical violations of probation or parole as follows:
  - i. First revocation: Up to 3 days
  - ii. Second revocation: Up to 5 days
  - iii. Third revocation: Up to 10 days
  - iv. Fourth and subsequent revocation: Up to 10 days and a referral to the PACE program; or, if the PACE program is not available in the jurisdiction, the sanction would be left to judicial or Board discretion.
  - v. Revocation for absconding<sup>52</sup>: Up to 30 days.
  - vi. These limits would not apply if the probationer or parolee is a sex offender who has failed to complete sex offender treatment.
- b. Requiring that probationers and parolees who are detained awaiting a revocation hearing for a technical violation of their community supervision be released back to probation and/or parole supervision on personal recognizance after serving the maximum allowable time outlined above, unless new criminal charges have been filed.
- c. Requiring that courts convert any unperformed Community Work Service directed in a judgment to a fine – and not to jail time - once the deadline set and announced at the time of

sentencing has elapsed.

- d. Stipulating that jail time cannot be imposed because a person failed to complete treatment if, despite having made a good faith effort, they were unable to afford treatment.
  - i. Additionally, including substance abuse treatment as a reinvestment priority for indigent offenders who are:
    - 1. Referred to ASAP by the court; and
    - 2. At a moderate to high risk of re-offending and in need of substance abuse treatment, as determined by a validated risk and needs assessment.

#### **Recommendation 14: Establish a system of earned compliance credits**

A robust body of research shows reduced recidivism when resources are focused on high risk offenders and front-loaded toward the first months following release. However, 39 percent of offenders on probation or parole are classified as low-risk, and supervising these offenders for long periods of time costs Alaska resources without improving public safety.

Earned compliance credits can provide a powerful incentive for offenders to participate in programs, obtain and retain employment, and remain drug- and alcohol-free.<sup>53</sup> As compliant and low risk offenders earn their way off supervision, earned compliance credits also work to focus limited supervision resources on the higher risk offenders who most require attention.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To focus resources on offenders at the highest risk to reoffend and to incentivize compliance with the offender's conditions of probation or parole, the Commission recommends:

- a. Statutorily establishing an earned compliance policy that grants probationers and parolees one month credit towards their probation and/or parole term for each month they are in compliance with the conditions of supervision.
- b. Establishing an automated time accounting system wherein probationers/parolees automatically earn the credit each month unless a violation report has been filed in that month.

#### **Recommendation 15: Reduce maximum lengths for probation terms and standardize early discharge proceedings**

Over the past decade, the average time that an offender spends on probation or parole prior to discharge has increased by 13 percent. However, a review of Alaska's data demonstrates that failure on supervision is most likely to happen in the first three months after an offender's release. Longer stays on probation and parole divert supervision resources that could be better focused on higher risk offenders at the time when they are most likely to fail on supervision.

Additionally, while the DOC currently has the option of recommending early termination of probation or parole to the court or Parole Board, there are no guidelines for when this option should be used, leading to differences in practice from region to region. Further, several statutory barriers restrict the usefulness of this option, including a restriction on terminating probation early

for Rule 11 (plea agreement) cases, and a requirement that offenders serve at least two years on parole before being discharged.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To more effectively focus scarce probation and parole resources on offenders at the time they are most likely to re-offend or fail, the Commission recommends:

- a. Capping maximum probation terms at the following:
  - i. A maximum of 5 years for felony sex offenders and Unclassified felony offenders;
  - ii. A maximum of 3 years for all other felony offenders;
  - iii. A maximum of 2 years for 2<sup>nd</sup> DUI and DV assault misdemeanor offenders; and
  - iv. A maximum of 1 year for all other misdemeanor offenders.
- b. Reducing the minimum time needed to serve on probation or parole prior to being eligible for early discharge to 1 year.
- c. Requiring the DOC to recommend early termination of probation or parole to the court/Parole Board for any offender who has completed all treatment programs required as a condition of supervision and is currently in compliance with all supervision conditions.
- d. Requiring the DOC to provide notification to the victim when recommending early discharge, with an opportunity for the victim to provide input at the court or Parole Board hearing.
- e. Authorizing courts to terminate probation early in cases where the sentence was imposed in accordance with a plea agreement under Rule 11 and DOC is recommending early discharge for good behavior.

**Recommendation 16: Extend good time eligibility to offenders serving sentences on electronic monitoring**

Most offenders who are housed within an institution have the opportunity to earn “good time” up to one-third off their sentences in acknowledgement of positive behavior. However, offenders who are serving their sentence on electronic monitoring are currently banned by statute from earning this incentive.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To incentivize compliance with the conditions of electronic monitoring, the Commission recommends allowing offenders on electronic monitoring to qualify for good time credits under the same conditions set forth for offenders in DOC institutions.

**Recommendation 17: Focus ASAP resources to improve program effectiveness**

Alaska’s Alcohol Safety Action Program (“ASAP”) provides screening and treatment referral services for thousands of misdemeanor offenders who are referred by the court. Unfortunately, the Commission finds that under-funding of ASAP has limited the program’s effectiveness.

This Commission believes that the best policy would be to increase funding for ASAP to allow the agency to provide more robust screening and treatment resources to all offenders struggling with substance abuse. The Commission also recognizes that, in the current fiscal climate, this is unlikely

– and in light of that, recommends focusing available ASAP resources on a smaller subset of high-risk misdemeanants to achieve better results.

***Specific Action Recommended:*** To increase the effectiveness of the ASAP program, the Commission recommends:

- a. Focusing ASAP resources on offenders at the highest risk of taking up future prison resources through one of the following means:<sup>54</sup>
  - i. Limiting the offense categories that courts would be authorized to refer to ASAP to those currently mandated by statute (DUI, refusal to submit to a chemical test, and habitual minor consuming).
  - ii. Alternatively, limiting the offense categories that courts would be authorized to refer to ASAP to second-time misdemeanor DUI and refusal to submit to a chemical test offenses, as well as alcohol-related assault 4 offenses.
- b. Requiring ASAP to expand the services it provides to include:
  - i. Using a validated assessment tool to screen for criminogenic risk;
  - ii. Performing a brief behavioral health screening; and
  - iii. Providing referrals to treatment programs designed to address offenders' individual high priority criminogenic needs including, but not limited to, substance abuse.
- c. Requiring ASAP provide increased case supervision for moderate to high risk offenders as resources permit.

**Recommendation 18: Improve treatment offerings in CRCs and focus use of CRC resources on high-need offenders**

CRCs, otherwise known as halfway houses, have the potential to effectively support offenders who are transitioning back to the community from prison. However, the Commission found that CRCs are likely mixing low and high risk offenders, which research has shown can lead to increased recidivism for low risk offenders.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, the Commission found that CRCs would be more effective at reducing recidivism if the facilities offered treatment for offenders in addition to supervision.

***Specific Action Recommended:*** To reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for offenders placed in CRCs, the Commission recommends:

- a. Requiring CRCs to provide treatment (cognitive-behavioral, substance abuse, after care and/or support services) designed to address offenders' individual criminogenic needs.
- b. Adopting quality assurance procedures to ensure CRCs are meeting contractual obligations with regard to safety and offender management.
- c. Implementing admission criteria for CRCs that:
  - i. Prioritize placement in CRCs for people who would benefit most from more intensive supervision and treatment, using the results of a validated risk and needs assessment; and

- ii. Minimize the mixing of low and high risk offenders.

### *Ensure oversight and accountability*

#### **Recommendation 19: Require collection of key performance measures and establish an oversight council**

The reforms to Alaska’s corrections and criminal justice systems will require careful implementation and oversight. Moreover, additional legislative and administrative reforms may be needed after implementation to enable the state to realize the goals of justice reinvestment. Several states that have enacted similar comprehensive reform packages, including Georgia, South Carolina, and South Dakota, have mandated data collection on key performance measures and required oversight councils to track implementation, report on outcomes, and recommend additional reforms if necessary. Many of these states have also charged the oversight councils with helping to administer ongoing reinvestment dollars based upon the savings associated with the reforms.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To ensure that reforms are monitored for fidelity and efficacy, and to better prepare the state to meet the objectives of justice reinvestment, the Commission recommends:

- a. Requiring the ACS, the DOC, the Department of Health and Social Services (“DHSS”), the DOL, the DPS, and the Parole Board to collect and report data annually on key performance measures.
- b. Creating a Justice Reinvestment Oversight Task Force (“Task Force”), composed of legislative, executive, and judicial branch members, as well as members representing crime victims and Alaska Natives, charged with:
  - i. Monitoring and reporting back to the Legislature and Governor on the implementation and outcomes of the Commission’s recommendations;
  - ii. If needed, making additional recommendations for legislative and administrative changes to achieve the state’s justice reinvestment goals;
  - iii. Helping to administer reinvestment dollars and develop plans on an annual basis for ongoing reinvestment of a portion of the state general fund savings achieved through pretrial, sentencing, and corrections reforms, based on observed outcomes and cost-benefit estimates; and
  - iv. Assessing state government processes to ensure victim restitution and violent crimes compensation are working effectively to meet crime victim needs.

#### **Recommendation 20: Ensure policymakers are aware of the impact of all future legislative proposals that could affect prison populations**

Many sentencing and corrections reforms do not affect biennial budgets, but have significant impact on budgets four, six, and eight years out or longer. Fiscal impact statements that cover a longer period of time would give policymakers a more accurate account of the implications of proposed sentencing and corrections policies on the state prison population and budget.

***Specific Action Recommended:*** To ensure that policymakers are informed of the long-term fiscal impact of proposed corrections policies, require 10-year fiscal impact statements to accompany future sentencing and corrections legislation.

### ***Recommendation 21: Advance crime victim priorities***

Crime victims, survivors, and victim advocates are important stakeholders in the work of the Commission. Two roundtable discussions were held in September 2015 to provide survivors and advocates with an overview of the Commission's work, and to seek their input in establishing priorities for crime victims and those who serve them in Alaska. These roundtables were supplemented with significant additional outreach to victim advocates in the state. The Commission did not make data- or fact-findings related to crime victims or victim services. Instead, the following recommendations reflect the shared concerns expressed by victims, survivors, and advocates in the state.

***Proposed Administrative Reforms:*** To advance reforms addressing the needs of crime victims, the Commission recommends the following administrative reforms:

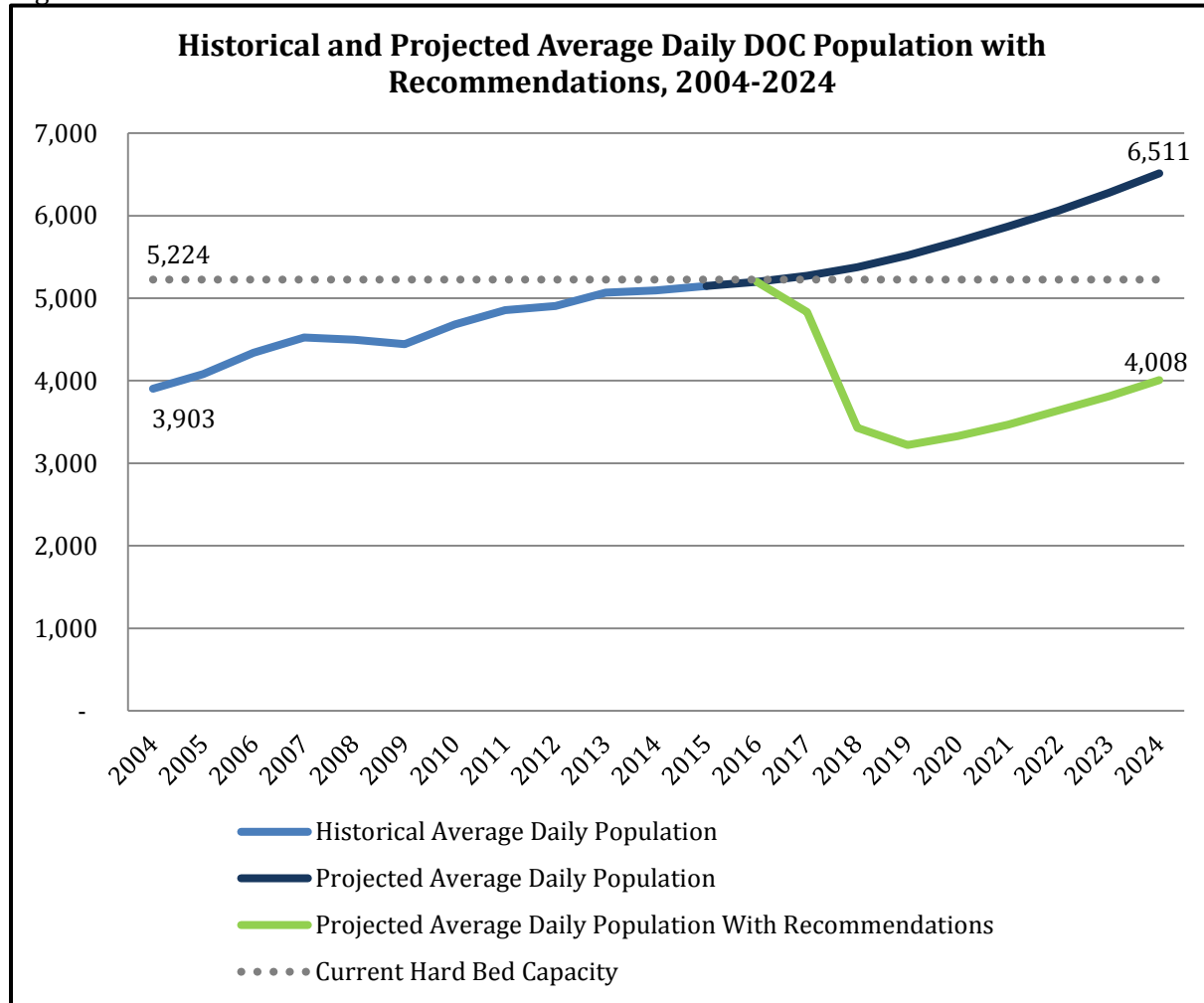
- a. The DOL and District Attorneys' offices should make enhanced efforts to increase the number of crime victims signed up for court notifications through VINE.
- b. The DOC should review and revise policies and procedures related to inmate phone calls and visitation to reduce the likelihood of offenders contacting victims.
- c. The DOC should review and revise policies and procedures to include an increased focus on crime victim needs during offender transition and reentry planning.
- d. The training standards for criminal justice professionals should contain more specific provisions related to the frequency and content of victim-focused training, with input as appropriate from victim advocacy organizations in the state.
- e. The state should authorize the DHSS to provide similar trauma-informed services for child victims as the services that exist for adult victims.
- f. The courts and criminal justice agencies should take steps to make communications and documents more accessible for non-English speakers and people with low levels of literacy.

## **Impacts of Commission's Consensus Recommendations**

Enacting all 21 of the Commission's consensus recommendations is projected to reduce the average daily prison population by 21 percent over the next 10 years, netting an estimated \$424 million in prison costs through 2024. (See figure 7, next page.) This number includes both the savings associated with averting projected prison growth (\$169 million) and the savings associated with reducing the population below current levels (\$255 million).

These impacts are contingent upon successful implementation and funding of the above recommendations.

Figure 7.



Source: The Alaska Department of Corrections; the Pew Charitable Trusts.

## Reinvestment Priorities

Recognizing that these recommendations will result in substantial state general fund savings over the next decade, the Commission strongly recommends reinvesting a portion of the savings into priority services designed to protect public safety, reduce victimization, and sustain reductions in the prison population.

With the understanding that prison population reductions and the associated savings will likely be achieved in the near future, the Commission recommends that the state provide an upfront

investment, and ongoing reinvestment based on guidance from the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Task Force, into the following priority services:

- a. Pretrial services. Provide resources for the DOC to conduct pretrial risk assessments, make recommendations to the court regarding release and release conditions, and provide varying levels of supervision in the community.
- b. Victims' services in remote and bush communities. Provide for emergency housing and travel, forensic exam training and equipment for health care providers, and community-driven programs that address cultural and geographic issues.
- c. Violence prevention. Provide for community-based programming focused on prevention, education, bystander intervention, restorative justice, evidence-based offender intervention, and building healthy communities.
- d. Treatment services. Fund treatment and programming in facilities and in the community to address criminogenic needs, behavioral health, substance abuse, and sexual offending behavior.
- e. Reentry and support services. Expand transitional housing, employment, case management, and support for addiction recovery.

## Additional Recommendations for Legislative Consideration

In addition to the consensus package of reforms above, the Commission also voted to forward the following six recommendations that received majority approval. Taken in concert with the consensus policy package, these policies are projected to reduce the average daily prison population by 26 percent and save the state an estimated \$447 million dollars over the following decade.

### **Additional Recommendation 1: Require that all misdemeanor DUI and refusal to submit to a chemical test offenders serve their incarceration terms in proven prison alternatives** (variation on recommendation 5(e))

In 2014, over 2,500 offenders were admitted to prison post-conviction for a misdemeanor DUI, and an additional 105 offenders were admitted for refusal to submit to a chemical test – together, comprising a quarter of all post-conviction admissions in that year. The Commission reviewed a number of studies on the effective management of DUI offenders, including a 2014 study which found that jail sentences for DUI offenders were associated with higher recidivism rates than sentences to probation, even when controlling for differences between offender groups.<sup>56</sup> Additional studies have found that, no matter that number of past DUI convictions (1, 2, or 3 or more), sanctions involving jail time were associated with the highest recidivism rates.<sup>57</sup>

Specific Action Recommended: In recognition of the limited and potentially negative impacts of jail sanctions for DUI offenders, including repeat DUI offenders, a majority of Commission members recommend requiring all misdemeanor DUI and refusal to submit to a chemical test offenders (including those with a prior offense) to serve their incarceration terms in prison alternatives – specifically supervision under remote surveillance technologies or a CRC. In cases where electronic



monitoring is not available, the offenders can be assigned to serve their incarceration sentence on supervised probation.

**Additional Recommendation 2: Set the weight threshold at which more serious commercial drug offenses are differentiated from less serious offenses at 5g** (variation on recommendation 6(c))

While the Commission unanimously sought to differentiate more serious commercial drug offenses from less serious commercial drug offenses through the use of a weight-based system, a number of Commissioners sought to set the dividing weight at an amount higher than 2.5g, with the understanding that many drug addicts engage in low-level sale offenses primarily to support their habit, and therefore do not fall into the category of serious drug dealers.

*Specific Action Recommended:* A majority of Commission members recommend setting the weight at which more serious drug commercial drug offenses are differentiated from less serious offenses at 5g.

**Additional Recommendation 3: Bring presumptive ranges under the ceiling of prior presumptive terms** (variation on recommendation 8)

While the Commission unanimously sought to align non-sex presumptive sentencing ranges with prior presumptive terms, a number of Commissioners also sought to reduce average prison stays below 2005 levels – pointing to the robust body of research demonstrating that, even when controlling for offender characteristics, inmates who are sentenced to longer periods of incarceration are not less likely to commit a crime upon release than similarly situated offenders sentenced to shorter periods of incarceration.

*Specific Action Recommended:* In accordance with the research demonstrating that longer prison stays do not reduce recidivism more than shorter prison stays, a majority of Commission members recommend bringing presumptive ranges under the ceiling of the 2005 presumptive terms, and extending presumptive probation to both first- and second-time Class C Felony offenders.

**Additional Recommendation 4: Return sentence lengths for Felony C and B sex offenders to pre-2006 levels**

Over the last decade, the average length of stay behind bars for felony sex offenders has grown by 84 percent. Since 2005, Felony B sex offenders are staying an average of 120 percent longer and Felony C sex offenders are staying an average of 45 percent longer in prison. These longer prison stays were likely driven in part by significant increases in the lengths of sex offender sentences (both minimums and maximums) pursuant to legislative changes in 2006.

The Commission reviewed research demonstrating that sex offenders have a low risk of recidivism compared to other offense types. The most recent Alaska Judicial Council study of recidivism in the state found that sex offenders have substantially lower rates of rearrest within one year than other offense groups.<sup>58</sup> The same study found that sex offenders were reconvicted for a new sex offense

within two years at a rate of two percent.<sup>59</sup> Similar findings have also been borne out in national studies of recidivism rates.<sup>60</sup>

*Specific Action Recommended:* In accordance with the research demonstrating that sex offenders have a low risk of recidivism compared to other offense types, and that longer prison stays do not reduce recidivism more than shorter prison stays, a majority of Commission members recommend returning sentence lengths for Felony C and B sex offenders to 2005 levels.

**Additional Recommendation 5: Expand Medicaid funding to provide substance abuse treatment for indigent offenders**

Substance abuse and mental illness are associated with a substantial number of crimes committed in Alaska. A 2012 study found that Mental Health Trust beneficiaries, defined as individuals with mental illness, chronic alcoholism, traumatic brain injuries, and developmental disabilities, comprised 30 percent of individuals entering the prison system and 65 percent of the standing prison population.<sup>61</sup>

Yet stakeholders report that the need for substance abuse and mental health treatment far exceeds demand, both in institutions and in the community. In communities that do have some form of treatment available, waitlists are long, and free or subsidized options are limited; in much of rural Alaska, options are limited or non-existent.

*Specific Action Recommended:* To reduce the likelihood that high risk offenders in need of substance abuse and/or mental health treatment will re-offend, a majority of Commission members recommend expanding the availability of funding for treatment by both maximizing the enrollment of eligible offenders and better equipping private providers to bill Medicaid.

**Additional Recommendation 6: Limit the use of multiple misdemeanor revocations for the same allegation of program noncompliance**

*Specific Action Recommended:* To motivate probationers to participate in and complete treatment and programming, while also reducing the number of misdemeanants who are revoked and serve multiple jail terms for the same allegation of program noncompliance, a majority of Commission members recommend:

- a. Requiring that the court process misdemeanor revocations for failure to comply with substance abuse or other programming in such a manner that one single petition is processed for that violation.
- b. Ensuring that, after adjudication, the defendant is offered the opportunity to complete the required programming and a disposition hearing is continued for the purpose of assuring either successful completion of the program condition or a one-time suspended jail imposition and deletion of the program condition.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Note: Unless otherwise cited, the analyses in this report were conducted for the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission by the Public Safety Performance Project of the Pew Charitable Trusts using annual cohort recidivism rates, prison and probation/parole admission, release, and stock population data 2005-2014 as well as aggregate community residential center and electronic monitoring counts provided by the Alaska Department of Corrections; criminal charge information 2005-2014 provided by the Alaska Court System; and national data from sources including the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reports and the US Census Bureau population forecasts.
- <sup>2</sup> Ben Anderson, (2012) "Opening Soon: Alaska's \$240 million Goose Creek Prison," *Alaska Dispatch News*, <http://www.adn.com/article/opening-soon-alaskas-240-million-goose-creek-prison>.
- <sup>3</sup> National Association of State Budget Officers (1987), "The State Expenditure Report", [http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/ER\\_1987.PDF](http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/ER_1987.PDF); National Association of State Budget Officers (2007), State Expenditure Report Fiscal 2006", [http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/ER\\_2006.pdf](http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/ER_2006.pdf). Note: Comparison excludes capital expenditures.
- <sup>4</sup> National Association of State Budget Officers (2014) "Examining Fiscal State Spending 2011-2013", <http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/State%20Expenditure%20Report%20%28Fiscal%202011-2013%20Data%29.pdf>.
- <sup>5</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool (CSAT), <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=nps>; Bureau of Justice Statistics (2015), "Prisoners in 2014", <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p14.pdf>.
- <sup>6</sup> Pew Public Safety Performance Project (2012), "2012 Georgia Public Safety Reform", <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/0001/01/01/2012-georgia-public-safety-reform>.
- <sup>7</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, UCR Data Tool <http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/Search/Crime/State/StateCrime.cfm>; Bureau of Justice Statistics, Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool (CSAT), <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=nps>.
- <sup>8</sup> In Alaska, courts are legally required to consider the likelihood that the defendant will miss their court hearings and the likelihood that the defendant poses a danger to the victim, other persons, or the community (according to AS 12.30.006).
- <sup>9</sup> Mamalian (2011), "State of the Science of Pretrial Risk Assessment", [https://www.bja.gov/publications/pij\\_pretrialriskassessment.pdf](https://www.bja.gov/publications/pij_pretrialriskassessment.pdf); Lowenkamp & Van Nostrand (2013), "Assessing Pretrial Risk Without a Defendant Interview", [http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/LJAF\\_Report\\_no-interview\\_FNL.pdf](http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/LJAF_Report_no-interview_FNL.pdf).
- <sup>10</sup> VanNostrand (2009), "Pretrial Risk Assessment in the Federal Court", [http://www.pretrial.org/download/risk-assessment/Pretrial%20Risk%20Assessment%20in%20the%20Federal%20Court%20Final%20Report%20\(2009\).pdf](http://www.pretrial.org/download/risk-assessment/Pretrial%20Risk%20Assessment%20in%20the%20Federal%20Court%20Final%20Report%20(2009).pdf).
- <sup>11</sup> Lowenkamp, VanNostrand, & Holsinger (2013), "The Hidden Cost of Pretrial Detention", <http://www.pretrial.org/download/research/The%20Hidden%20Costs%20of%20Pretrial%20Detention%20-%20LJAF%202013.pdf>. Note: For this population, pretrial detention of 8-14 days and 31 or more days were not significantly associated with an increase in odds of failure to appear. Statistically significant differences were found for those who were detained for 2-3, 4-7, and 5-30 days as compared to 1 days or less.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>13</sup> Schnacke (2014), "Money As a Criminal Justice Stakeholder: The Judge's Decision to Release or Detain a Defendant Pretrial", <http://www.pretrial.org/download/research/Money%20as%20a%20Criminal%20Justice%20Stakeholder.pdf>.
- <sup>14</sup> Jones (2013), "Unsecured Bonds: The As Effective and Most Efficient Pretrial Release Option", <http://www.pretrial.org/download/research/Unsecured+Bonds.+The+As+Effective+and+Most+Efficient+Pretrial+Release+Option+-+Jones+2013.pdf>.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> Note: A random sample of 400 case files (usable bail information N=310) from Anchorage, Juneau, Bethel, Fairbanks, and Nome Courts was selected and reviewed to examine pretrial releases conditions and sentence lengths. Data entry and analysis were conducted by Pew and the Alaska Judicial Council in July 2015. All findings related to bail conditions were derived from this analysis.
- <sup>17</sup> National Research Council (2014), "The Growth of Incarceration in the United States", <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18613/the-growth-of-incarceration-in-the-united-states-exploring-causes>.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Campbell Collaboration (2015), "The Effects on Re-Offending of Custodial vs. Non-Custodial Sanctions: An Updated Systematic Review of the State of Knowledge", <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/lib/project/22/>; Nagin &

- Snodgrass (2013), "The Effect of Incarceration on Re-Offending: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Pennsylvania", <http://repository.cmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1407&context=heinworks>; Nagin, Cullen, & Lero Jonson (2009), "Imprisonment and Reoffending", [http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/599202?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/599202?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents); Meade, Steiner, Makarios, & Travis (2012), "Estimating a Dose-Response Relationship Between Time Served in Prison and Recidivism", <http://jrc.sagepub.com/content/50/4/525.abstract>.
- <sup>20</sup> Campbell Collaboration (2015), "The Effects on Re-Offending of Custodial vs. Non-Custodial Sanctions: An Updated Systematic Review of the State of Knowledge"; Nagin, Cullen, & Lero Jonson (2009), "Imprisonment and Reoffending".
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> Spohn & Holleran (2002), "The Effect of Imprisonment on Recidivism Rates of Felony Offenders: A Focus on Drug Offenders", <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2002.tb00959.x/abstract>; Nieuwbeerta, Nagin, & Blokland (2009), "Assessing the Impact of First Time Imprisonment on Offender's Subsequent Criminal Career Development: A Matched Samples Comparison", <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10940-009-9069-7>.
- <sup>23</sup> Nagin, Cullen, & Lero Jonson (2009), "Imprisonment and Reoffending".
- <sup>24</sup> Note: It is possible the increase in length of stay for felony sex offense convictions is an underestimate given the long sentences being served by many individuals convicted of sex offenses. The length of stay average is calculated based on the average time spent by offenders in their category released in a given year. As many sex offenders receive very long sentences, especially since sentencing ranges were broadened in 2006, the mean length of stay for offenders in this group might not reflect how long the average sex offender is likely to serve.
- <sup>25</sup> Andrews (1999), "Recidivism Is Predictable and Can Be Influenced: Using Risk Assessments to Reduce Recidivism", [http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/forum/e012/12j\\_e.pdf](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/forum/e012/12j_e.pdf).
- <sup>26</sup> Grasmack & Bryjak (1980), "The Deterrent Effect of Perceived Severity in Punishment", [http://www.jstor.org/stable/2578032?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2578032?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents); Farabee (2005), "Rethinking Rehabilitation: Why Can't We Reform Our Criminals?", [http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/20050111\\_book806text.pdf](http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/20050111_book806text.pdf).
- <sup>27</sup> Nagin & Pogarsky (2000), "Integrating Celerity, Impulsivity, and Extralegal Sanction Threats into a Model of General Deterrence: Theory and Evidence", <https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/econ/Durlauf/networkweb1/London/Criminology1-15-01.pdf>.
- <sup>28</sup> Wodahl, Garland, Culhane, & McCarty (2011), "Utilizing Behavioral Interventions to Improve Supervision Outcomes in Community-Based Corrections", <http://cjb.sagepub.com/content/38/4/386.abstract>.
- <sup>29</sup> National Research Council (2007), "Parole, Desistance from Crime, and Community Integration", <https://cdpsdocs.state.co.us/ccij/Resources/Ref/NCR2007.pdf>; Grattet, Petersilia, & Lin (2008), "Parole Violations and Revocations in California", <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/224521.pdf>.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Adult Criminal Justice "Benefit-Cost Results.". <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost?topicId=2>.
- <sup>32</sup> Note: For these categories of defendants, in order for the court to depart from a recommendation of personal recognizance or unsecured bond, and order secured money bond, it would have to find on the record that there is clear and convincing evidence that no other conditions of release can reasonably assure court appearance and public safety.
- <sup>33</sup> Note: A performance bond is an agreement between the defendant and the court that if the defendant violates his or her conditions of release, he or she will forfeit a certain amount of money. A *secured* performance bond requires the defendant to pay upfront in order to be released, and the defendant would get that money back if they successfully completed the pretrial period. An *unsecured* performance bond does not require an upfront payment, but if the defendant violates conditions of release, the court can order the defendant to pay that amount of money. A *partially-secured* performance bond would require payment of 10 percent of the bond amount upfront in order to be released. That amount would be recoverable if the defendant successfully completes the pretrial period. Currently in Alaska, courts only have authority to issue *secured* performance bonds. As used in the policy description on the pretrial release decision-making grid, "unsecured bond" would refer to both appearance bonds and performance bonds, but statutes would have to change to permit courts to issue unsecured performance bonds.
- <sup>34</sup> VanNostrand (2009), "Pretrial Risk Assessment in the Federal Court", <http://www.pretrial.org/download/risk-assessment/Pretrial%20Risk%20Assessment%20in%20the%20Federal%20Court%20Final%20Report%20%282009%29.pdf>.
- <sup>35</sup> Note: Currently, the statute disqualifies a person from serving as a third-party custodian if they *may be called* as a witness.
- <sup>36</sup> Note: FTA with intent to avoid prosecution and FTA for more than 30 days; and for violation of a protective order or no-contact order.

<sup>37</sup> Boyum & Reuter (2005), "An Analytic Assessment of Drug Policy, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research", [http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/-an-analytic-assessment-of-us-drug-policy\\_112041831996.pdf](http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/-an-analytic-assessment-of-us-drug-policy_112041831996.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> Note: This policy would reclassify all unaggravated simple possession as a misdemeanor offense (currently set forth in AS 11.71.040(a)(3).

<sup>39</sup> Note: This policy extends to commercial offenses relating to IA controlled substances (currently set forth in AS 11.71.020(a)(1).

<sup>40</sup> Note: This policy extends to commercial offenses related to IA, IIA and IIIA controlled substances (currently set forth in AS 11.71.020(a)(1) and AS 11.71.030(a)(1).

<sup>41</sup> Pew Charitable Trusts (forthcoming), "The Effects of Changing State Theft Penalties".

<sup>42</sup> Note: Includes theft, concealing merchandise, issuing a bad check, vehicle theft, criminal mischief, unlawful possession, misapplication of property, criminal simulation, and removal of I.D. marks.

<sup>43</sup> Alaska State Legislature (2005), "Senate Bill 56".

<sup>44</sup> Note: Comparison years are 2006 and 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Note: Excludes Unclassified felonies.

<sup>46</sup> Note: The enhanced sentence applies to possessed a firearm, used a dangerous instrument, or caused serious physical injury or death during the commission of the offense, or knowingly directed the conduct at a peace officer or first responder who was engaged in official duties and to manufacturing of methamphetamine offenses if knowing within presence of children.

<sup>47</sup> Note: The enhanced sentence applies to violations of AS 11.41.130 (CN Homicide) and the victim was a child under 16 and to manufacturing of methamphetamine offenses if reckless within presence of children.

<sup>48</sup> Note: Maximum allowable imprisonment term if probation is not imposed.

<sup>49</sup> Alaska Judicial Council (2011), "Criminal Recidivism in Alaska, 2008 and 2009",

<http://www.ajc.state.ak.us/reports/recid2011.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2015), "What Works and What Does Not?: Cost-Benefit Findings from WSIPP", [http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1602/Wsipp\\_What-Works-and-What-Does-Not-Benefit-Cost-Findings-from-WSIPP\\_Report.pdf](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1602/Wsipp_What-Works-and-What-Does-Not-Benefit-Cost-Findings-from-WSIPP_Report.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, (2009) "Cutting Corrections Costs: Earned Time Policies for State Prisoners," [http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cj/earned\\_time\\_report.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cj/earned_time_report.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> As used here, "absconding" is defined as failing to report within 5 working days after release or failing to report for 30 days.

<sup>53</sup> Petersilia (2007), "Employ Behavioral Contracting for "Earned Discharge" Parole",

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2007.00472.x/pdf>; Wodahl, Garland, Culhane, & McCarty

(2011), "Utilizing Behavioral Interventions to Improve Supervision Outcomes in Community-Based Corrections";

American Probation and Parole Association (2014), "Administrative Responses in Probation and Parole Supervision: A Research Memo", <http://www.appa-net.org/eWeb/Resources/SPSP/Research-Memo.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> The Commission has chosen to forward two iterations of this policy to the legislature for its consideration.

<sup>55</sup> Lowenkamp & Latessa (2002), "Evaluation of Ohio's Community Based Correctional Facilities and Halfway House Programs", [https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/reports/project\\_reports/HH\\_CBCF\\_Report1.pdf](https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/reports/project_reports/HH_CBCF_Report1.pdf).

<sup>56</sup> Bachmann & Dixon (2014), "DWI Sentencing in the United States: Toward Promising Punishment Alternatives in Texas", <http://www.sascv.org/ijcjs/pdfs/bachmannandixonijcjs2014vol9issue2.pdf>; Martin, Annan, & Forst (1993), "The

Special Deterrent Effects of a Jail Sanction on First-Time Drunk Drivers: A Quasi-Experimental Study", [http://www.researchgate.net/publication/14800968\\_The\\_special\\_deterrent\\_effects\\_of\\_a\\_jail\\_sanction\\_on\\_first-time\\_drunk\\_drivers\\_A\\_quasi-experimental\\_study](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/14800968_The_special_deterrent_effects_of_a_jail_sanction_on_first-time_drunk_drivers_A_quasi-experimental_study);

Annan, Sampson, Martin, & Forst (1986), "Deterring the Drunk Driver: A Feasibility Study", <http://www.worldcat.org/title/deterring-the-drunk-driver-a-feasibility-study-technical-report/oclc/18578880>.

<sup>57</sup> DeYoung (1997), "An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Alcohol Treatment, Driver License Actions and Jail Terms in Reducing Drunk Driving Recidivism in California", <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9376781>.

<sup>58</sup> Alaska Judicial Council (2011), "Criminal Recidivism in Alaska, 2008 and 2009".

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics (2003), "Recidivism of Sex Offenders Released from Prison in 1994",

<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1136>.

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<sup>61</sup> Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc. (2014), "Trust Beneficiaries in Alaska's Department of Corrections", <http://mhtrust.org/mhtawp/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ADOC-Trust-Beneficiaries-May-2014-FINAL-PRINT.pdf>.