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Representative John Coghill

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## **House Approves Criminal Record Sharing** **Coghill's HB 120 Would Let Alaska Join State-Federal Data Pool**

(JUNEAU) – Alaska would share its criminal information records with the federal government and other states for use in non-criminal purposes, if a bill passed by the House today becomes law.

House Bill 120, sponsored by Rep. John Coghill Jr. (R-North Pole), would authorize the state to share background information it collects from persons arrested or imprisoned for criminal activity with the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact, a federal-state data-pooling organization set up in cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

“The FBI estimates that one in five criminals has a record in more than one state,” said Coghill. “Alaska could have access to more than 55 million criminal records nationally by linking its criminal history repository with those of the other states and the national records.”

Alaska has recently changed its state law to allow collection of background information from those seeking to work as teachers, school aides, schoolbus drivers or assisted living home workers. Criminal background checks are also required to license assisted living homes and foster homes that deal with vulnerable adults and children in need of aid. HB 120 would allow employers seeking to hire people for such jobs to access the information contained in the databases of the Compact signatories.

“Exchange of criminal information is not new, but this compact establishes more complete and clearly defined links between the states in the Compact,” Coghill said. The Compact is an effort to provide law enforcement officials with more detailed information that can be a more effective tool in tracking actual or potential criminal offenders.

Coghill said HB 120 is necessary because, while the federal government does make its criminal record database available to the states, those records do not include many states' information. So far eight states have signed up to join the compact, and the more states that join, the more useful the Compact database is for everyone, he said.

A safeguard against abuse of the system lies in a requirement that those seeking background information on an applicant must obtain that person's permission, which must include voluntary submission of fingerprints on a request for information, Coghill said.

HB 120 moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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**Broadcasters note:** Comments are available on the Majority Actuality Line 1 (800) 478-6540

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