

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Chair:

House Finance Subcommittees for;
Department of Public Safety
Department of Law

Member:

House Finance Committee
Legislative Council



Session:

Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-4958
Fax: (907) 465-4928
Toll Free (866) 465-4958

Interim:

PO Box 464
Chugiak, AK 99567

REPRESENTATIVE BILL STOLTZE

Representative_Bill_Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us

Sponsor Statement for Committee Substitute for House Bill 134 (STA)

“An Act authorizing the Department of Corrections to enter into lease-purchase agreements with municipalities for new or expanded public correctional facilities in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Bethel, the Municipality of Anchorage, and Seward.”

Since 1995, Alaska has been exploring options to resolve over-crowding in its correctional facilities, but the number of prison beds has not been adequately increased to meet demand. Instead, facilities in state remain overcrowded even though approximately 650 prisoners are being held in another state. This results in approximately \$20 million per year flowing out of Alaska’s economy.

Committee Substitute for [House Bill 134](#) (STA) would increase beds in Alaska by providing legislative authorization for local governments to enter into lease-purchase agreements with the Department of Corrections for the construction of new prison facilities and add additional beds at facilities currently owned by the state. The State of Alaska would then enter into long-term lease purchase agreements and operate the facilities as part of the state correctional system.

CS HB 134 (STA) proposes incrementally expanding the existing facilities in Bethel, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Seward to meet regional needs by the addition of up to a total of 800 new beds. It resolves current and future overcrowding by building a large centralized 1,250 bed prison in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. In comparison with other proposed new facilities, the centralized location would result in additional cost savings by its close proximity to services such as food service, police, and the courthouse.

I believe that the [Department of Corrections](#) provides quality assurance for the safety of the prison personnel and the public, which is central to the reason I support this approach to build the needed prison space.

I ask for your consideration and support of CS HB 134 (STA) to resolve overcrowding, thereby decreasing the current threat to prison workers’ safety, and to the public, while retaining Alaska’s prisoners within the state.

DISTRICT 16

**BIRCHWOOD • BUTTE • CHUGIAK • EKLUTNA • FAIRVIEW LOOP
KNIK RIVER ROAD • LAZY MOUNTAIN • PALMER • PETERS CREEK**