

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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## SENATOR LYDA GREEN SENATE DISTRICT G

### Sponsor Statement for SB 159

[Senate Bill 159](#) gives the [Alaska Board of Parole](#) flexibility to grant or deny medical parole to applicants. Thus the board will be better able to meet the needs of the prisoners, the department and communities.

The Alaska Parole Board has a proven track record in their decision-making abilities. Over the past seven years, the Alaska Board of Parole has granted parole to approximately 45% of all the *discretionary* parole applicants. Less than 8% of these parolees have violated their conditions (i.e. missed a meeting with a parole officer) and approximately 1% have committed a new offense. This number is particularly compelling when compared to the 77% return rate of *mandatory* parole violators.

This bill will allow the Alaska Board of Parole and the Department of Corrections to work together to determine an appropriate and cost effective release plan. The cost of health care to the Department of Corrections has significantly increased over the last few years. Some of the factors causing these increases are:

- The increased population of terminally ill inmates
- The recent Seward Highway accident on November 19, 2002
- Hospitalization of prisoners for long-term assisted care

When making a determination for Medical Parole the following are considered:

1. Department of Correction medical report
2. The seriousness of the criminal offense
3. Release plan
4. Parole Officer/DOC recommendation

Passage of this proposed legislation will allow the Alaska Board of Parole to use its endowed power and authority to make responsible decisions regarding all the factors mentioned above, while still considering the safety of the community.