

# Alaska State Legislature

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Senator Jerry Ward  
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## **Ward Proposes Juvenile Center for Kenai Peninsula** **Would Keep Youthful Offenders Closer to Home Communities**

(JUNEAU) – Sen. Jerry Ward (R-Kenai/Anchorage) introduced legislation today to build a youth detention center on the Kenai Peninsula.

At this time juvenile offenders from communities on the Kenai Peninsula are taken to McLaughlin Youth Center in Anchorage. This incurs transportation costs, increases overcrowding at McLaughlin and removes these youth from the support of their home communities.

In 1997, the Department of Health and Social Services identified the need for a youth facility to help alleviate these problems and to provide centralized “headquarters” for various local interdisciplinary agencies in the juvenile justice system. Following the department’s recommendation, a committee was formed and the City of Kenai donated land on Marathon Road for a new facility.

The planned facility will have nine single occupant detention cells and two observation cells. It will also include space for youth probation offices and youth education and community programs that will work with the detention program. The plan includes fenced outdoor exercise areas, an intake area and staff offices.

Senate Bill 150 would make the necessary appropriations to design and build the Kenai Peninsula Juvenile Detention Facility. Under the bill, \$250,000 would be appropriated for the design of the facility, and \$4.4 million would be appropriated for the construction of the facility.

“A local facility is critical to the rehabilitation and re-integration of the youth back in to the community,” said Ward. “With this bill we are taking the next step to making the project a reality.”

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**Comments from Sen. Ward are available on the Majority Actuality Line, 800-478-6540.**