

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Official Business

## **SENATOR THOMAS H. WAGONER**

- Co-Chair, Senate Resources Committee
- Co-Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
- Vice-Chair, Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee
- Member, Legislative Council

Session: January – May

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## **Sponsor Statement**

### **SB 309 - An Act related to the testing of prisoners for bloodborne pathogens.**

During 2003, approximately 40 Alaska correctional officers were potentially exposed to bloodborne pathogens when they came into contact with blood or other bodily fluids from prisoners. In most cases, the contamination was an intentional act.

If blood, bodily fluids or waste from a prisoner or person in custody contaminates a correctional officer, that person cannot be required to submit a blood sample for testing. Most states offer this type of protection to their correctional officers. The 18<sup>th</sup> Legislature moved in this direction by requiring blood tests for persons charged with sex offenses.

Currently, correctional officers who have been exposed may undergo a two-week treatment with a broad range of preventative medication for hepatitis, HIV, and other potential contagions. Reactions to the medication can lead to lost time on the job and a disruption of home life.

I respectfully request the support of my colleagues in providing our correctional officers with a tool to control their potential exposure to life-threatening contamination in their workplace.