



Press Release

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RETIRED JUSTICE ALEXANDER BRYNER, JUDGE TREVOR STEPHENS, JUDGE STEPHANIE RHOADES APPOINTED TO ALASKA CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

Anchorage, Alaska (July 17, 2014) - Chief Justice Dana Fabe has appointed Justice Alexander O. Bryner (Ret.), Judge Trevor Stephens, Presiding Judge First Judicial District, and Judge Stephanie Rhoades, Anchorage District Court to the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission created by the Senate Bill 64 the omnibus crime bill.

The judges are part of a 13 member inter-branch commission comprised of legislators, state and municipal officials, law enforcement, victims' rights advocates, and the Alaska Native community. The commission is charged with reviewing crime and incarceration rates, sentencing statutes and practices, including presumptive sentences, parole and probation practices, alternatives to traditional forms of incarceration, and the efficacy of treatment and rehabilitation programs. The commission is also tasked with studying and preparing a report on alcohol and driving offenses, ignition interlock devices, and driver's license revocation laws. The commission will make annual recommendations to the legislature.

- **Retired Justice Alexander O. Bryner** served on the Alaska Supreme Court from 1997 to 2007. He was appointed to the district court bench in Anchorage in 1975 and served until 1977. In 1977, he was appointed U.S. Attorney for Alaska and held that position until his appointment to the Court of Appeals in 1980. He served as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals from 1980 to 1997. Retired Justice Bryner worked with Alaska's current presumptive sentencing scheme for 17 years at many different levels of the court system.
- **Judge Trevor Stephens**, Presiding Judge of the First Judicial District, was born and raised in Ketchikan and was appointed to the superior court in 2000. Before becoming a judge, he worked in private practice, as an Assistant Public Defender and as an Assistant District Attorney and District Attorney. Judge Stephens is also the second most senior member of the Three Judge Sentencing Panel. He serves on the court system's Family Rules Committee, Jury Improvement Committee, and the Child in Need of Aid Court Improvement Committee.
- **Judge Stephanie Rhoades** has served as a District Court Judge in Anchorage since 1992. In 1998, Judge Rhoades established one of the first therapeutic courts in Anchorage. From 1997 to 2000, she served on the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission and chaired the Decriminalizing the Mentally Ill Committee. Judge Rhoades also served on the Alaska

Prisoner Reentry Task Force. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she worked as an Assistant District Attorney.

Chief Justice Fabe remarked that: *“Retired Justice Bryner, Judge Stephens, and Judge Rhoades have many years of experience working with Alaska’s sentencing laws, parole and probation issues, and treatment and rehabilitation programs. Their combined expertise in the areas of law and policy that the commission is charged with addressing make them highly qualified to evaluate the impact of sentencing laws and criminal justice practices, and to make recommendations for improvements. There is a growing trend both in Alaska and nationally to slow prison growth rates and reduce recidivism with Smart Justice. Smart Justice means reserving our most costly response to crime – prison time –for those cases where other less costly alternatives won’t effectively protect the public or rehabilitate the offender. As part of its charge to examine proven best practices adopted by other states in reducing recidivism, the commission may also examine the work of other inter-branch panels in Georgia, Idaho, Mississippi, and South Dakota that have developed sentencing and corrections reforms to reduce incarceration rates, rehabilitate offenders, improve public safety, and reduce recidivism.”*

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