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## Alaska's Participation in the Interstate Compact for Probation and Parole

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### **Summary**

The Interstate Compact for the Supervision of Parolees and Probationers is an agreement whereby one state agrees to provide supervision for offenders on community release from other states. Participants in the interstate compact agree that any state will accept supervision of a parolee or probationer providing the offender has proper residence either as a resident of that state or with family, and that he/she is able to find employment. Major increases in Alaska's prison population over the past decade have been accompanied by corresponding increases in the number of persons under probation/parole supervision and in the caseloads of individual probation officers. Using a master listing of all persons under the jurisdiction of the Alaska Department of Corrections from 1976 to 1983, the Justice Center at University of Alaska Anchorage made a preliminary assessment of the impact on Alaska of participation in the Interstate Compact. From 1976 to 1983, Alaska processed 1,551 offenders through the Interstate Compact, of whom 999 were received for supervision from other states (64.4% of the total) and 552 (35.6%) were sent to other states. Based on this data, the interstate compact has not yet been an equitable arrangement for any city in Alaska: each city has seen a greater number of incoming than of outgoing transfers.



**ALASKA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERSTATE COMPACT  
FOR PROBATION AND PAROLE**

A Report to the Alaska Division of Probation and Parole

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## INTRODUCTION

The interstate compact for the supervision of parolees and probationers is an agreement whereby one state agrees to provide supervision for offenders on community release from other states. The compact was initiated as a result of the federal Crime Control Consent Act of 1934. This Act permitted two or more states to enter into agreements for crime prevention. In recognition of the mobility of the American population, of the difficulties of maintaining supervision of offenders across state lines and of the need for formal arrangements to monitor offenders, the interstate commission on crime drafted the compact which was signed by twenty-five states in 1937.

Participants in the interstate compact agree that any state will accept supervision of a parolee or probationer providing the offender has proper residence either as a resident of that state or with family, and that he/she is able to find employment. If these conditions are not met, the receiving state can choose not to accept the offender. The supervising, or receiving, state must use the same standards of supervision for interstate cases as it does for its own parolees and probationers.

The sentencing state may recall a probationer or parolee being supervised under the compact at any time without formalities. Before leaving the sentencing state the parolee or probationer signs a waiver of extradition (Council of State Governments, 1978).

Participation in the compact demonstrates a willingness on

the part of the receiving state to supervise probationers and parolees who were originally residents of the state, or who have support networks in the state, or who may be seeking a "new life." It is assumed that the flow of offenders into and out of any given state will be equitable over time, i.e., that the total number of offenders received for supervision will be approximately equal to the total number sent elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> If this assumption should prove false there are serious implications for supervision caseloads in states which receive more offenders than they send.

Numbers in and out are only gross measures of exchange equity. A state may send out more offenders than it receives, but if most of those it sends have committed minor property crimes while most of those it receives have committed crimes against persons a different definition of equity may be required.

Major increases in Alaska's prison population have been accompanied by corresponding increases in the number of persons under probation/parole supervision. Between 1976 and 1986 the number of offenders under community supervision by the division of probation rose from an annualized figure of 1010 to 2153 (Department of Corrections Annual Report). This dramatic growth in the total population has resulted in proportional increases in the caseloads of individual probation officers. A perception among many officers that there has been an increase in the number of offenders requiring supervision under the interstate compact led to an interest in assessing the impact upon average caseloads of participation in the compact.

While supervision of incoming offenders requires a long-term commitment and regular demands on the probation officer's time, it should be noted that the processing of outgoing offenders requires time and effort as well and must be considered in a detailed impact assessment.

Clearly a number of factors must be considered in an assessment of Alaska's involvement in the Interstate Compact. This preliminary assessment was hampered by the lack of adequate historical data. No records of interstate transactions have been kept by either the Department of Corrections or its former parent agency, Health and Social Services. Because a major change in computer information systems was undertaken in 1984, much needed information from prior years is no longer retrievable.

Fortunately, a printout of all persons under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections prior to 1983 was available for this research. The data were maintained for case management purposes and did not include information which we consider crucial to a thorough assessment of the impact of the state's participation in the interstate compact. Nevertheless, this was the only information available and it was used to draw some preliminary conclusions which were based on aggregate numbers and could not, for the most part, be refined. The information available included state of original jurisdiction (sending state), destination (receiving state), date of birth, date supervision ends, sex, age, race, and status (probation or parole).

Data on interstate transfers were extracted from the printout

and computer processed. Several pertinent questions could not be answered by the available data. Intake date and instant offense were not available and are essential for a detailed impact study. If intake date were known, we would be able to determine the length of supervision by subtracting from the supervision end date. Without knowing the length of supervision for each offender under the compact we were unable to get an accurate picture of the changes in interstate caseloads on an annual basis. Length of supervision is also a factor in determining the caseload of the Division of Probation.

Knowing the instant offense for each case processed would give a more refined picture of the impact on caseloads. Persons under supervision are designated minimum, medium, or maximum and the amount of time devoted to the probationer/parolee varies according to the designation. Since offense behavior plays an important role in risk designation, it would be useful to have this information. Offense also is important in assessing community risk.

#### RESEARCH RESULTS

During the seven years between 1975 and 1984 Alaska processed 1551 offenders through the Interstate Compact; 999 were received for supervision (64.4% of the total) and 552 (35.6%) were sent to other states. It is significant that 45% more offenders entered the state than left it.

An effort was made to compare this figure with the total field supervision cases for the same years but similar data was

not maintained. Although aggregate annual case load data for these years is available from the Department of Corrections there is no way to break this information into a count of individuals. The data collected for the present study involved information on 1551 individuals. Since length of supervision varies from two years to as many as twenty, the yearly overlap of individuals on the annualized case load is considerable. At the same time the case management information for the study did not contain intake dates so annualized case loads could not be measured.

Annualized caseload information is collected by the Department of Corrections. The count is made on a specific census date and, if there is concern about the impact of the state's Interstate Compact caseload, compact supervisees could be counted on the same date and records kept of these as a percentage of the total.

The researchers expected that the outgoing transfers would tend to be on parole rather than on probation. A current investigation of case records seemed to indicate that a substantial number of state offenders who were incarcerated in federal prisons seemed to choose to be on parole in the states where they had been incarcerated. In fact, parolees constituted fewer than 25% of the total sample and were proportionally less of the outgoing offenders than of the incoming ones. Probationers are more likely to have been first offenders or to have been involved in less serious crimes than parolees are and therefore this proportion might be viewed as positive in assessing impacts on total caseloads.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The movement of Interstate Compact offenders to and from Alaska was largely a regional one. The major exchange was with states on the West Coast. Of the 999 offenders received by the state more than half (50.8%) were from the states of Washington, California, and Oregon. Of those sent out of Alaska (N=552), 51.8% went to the same three states. Information on the exchange is presented in Figure 3. The same five states appear as both states of original jurisdiction and as states of destination in the same order and in approximately the same proportion. The regional nature of the exchange was not unexpected. Movement between Alaska and Washington, California and Oregon is common for persons other than offenders. Many jobs in Alaska require skills which can be acquired in these states (e.g., forestry, fishing, construction). Many Alaskans go to these states for education and training and many have relatives in these states. The inclusion of Texas among the top five exchange states is also not surprising since, during the period under study, the oil fields were being developed and the trans-Alaska pipeline was under construction.

The ratio of males to females in the sample was 9:1. This ratio held constant for both incoming and outgoing offenders. The proportion is different for the state's incarcerated population in which females constitute closer to 6% of the total but comparison with supervised populations cannot be made for reasons already noted.

Racially the offenders in the sample are overwhelmingly white

(see Figure 3) which reflects the total urban population of the state. It was expected that Alaska Natives would constitute the largest minority in the sample since this group is 33% of the incarcerated population in Alaska. Alaska Natives include both Eskimos and several Indian groups (Athabaskan, Tlingit, etc.) but even when these two groups are combined they constitute a smaller percentage of the totals than do blacks. Some Alaska Natives prefer not to label themselves Indian and may be included as others. However, this group is so undefined that we cannot make this an assumption.

It is interesting that the number of blacks in the incoming group is identical to that in the outgoing group. As a proportion of the totals twice as many blacks leave the state as enter it under the compact.

The average age of Interstate Compact offenders during the seven-year data collection period was 30.5 years. The mode was 23. A small number of offenders were born before 1920 (N=26). Therefore, during supervision they ranged from age 58 to 80. The oldest offender was born in 1902, the youngest in 1964. The largest percentage (55.5) were in their twenties while the next largest percentage (28.0) were in their thirties. The remainder were primarily older than this. Only 2% were younger than twenty.

The impact of compact participation by Alaska city is of special interest. Data are presented in Table 5. As Alaska's largest city, Anchorage processed the largest number of

Interstate Compact participants: 482 incoming and 258 outgoing. Anchorage had a larger number of employment opportunities than most other cities and, with the largest population, the greatest possibility that an incoming offender would have relatives residing there. The ratio of incoming to outgoing offenders in Anchorage during the course of this study was 1.86:1 (Table 6).

Fairbanks is the second largest city in Alaska and had the second largest number of incoming (n=772) and outgoing (n=111) offenders. During the years encompassed by this study the city of Fairbanks experienced rapid growth in both population and development as it was a hub of pipeline activity.

Other cities experiencing a high rate of flux were Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan and Kodiak. The draw to these cities was likely due to job opportunities in commercial fishing, refineries, canneries and timber industries.

Based on our data, the interstate compact has not yet been an equitable arrangement for any city in Alaska. Each city has seen a greater number of incoming than of outgoing transfers.

## DISCUSSION

At the present time the state of Alaska is in an economic downturn. The Department of Corrections, with less money available, is trying to deal with major increases in population both in correctional institutions and under field service supervision. If the addition to case loads of Interstate Compact transfers is discovered to have a significant impact on the cost and quality of supervision in the state, more careful processing

of transfer requests might be undertaken in order to reduce the inflow.

The data collected for this paper was intended to provide background information for a study of the impact on Alaska of the state's participation in the Interstate Compact for probation and parole. Although the current study shows that the state has received almost twice as many transfers as it has sent to other states the cost to Alaska cannot be determined from the available data. There are different costs involved in supervising minimum, medium, and maximum risk supervisees. Without knowing the type of supervision required, this factor cannot be considered. Since 75.4 percent of incoming transfers in the sample were probationers we can infer that most did not require a maximum level of supervision, but more precise information is required for a valid assessment of cost in probation office time and effort.

Had instant offense information been available for the 1500 offenders in the sample some conclusions might have been drawn both about supervision level and about the risk to the public, particularly in terms of city of destination. In smaller Alaska communities distance supervision is the norm and site visits are costly since they require air travel. Again we might infer that probation status implies lower risk than parole status, but specific information is required for any valid assessment of public risk and supervision requirements.

Annualized case load data would also be useful for an assessment of the impact on probation field services of partici-

pation in the Interstate Compact. We encourage the Department to separate Interstate Compact transfers from their annual January census of persons under probation supervision. This step will be of assistance in future assessments of the impact of participation in the Interstate Compact on probation office workload. Our historical assessment is not very useful since we cannot develop any means of measuring Compact transfers as a percentage of total offenders under supervision.

The data in this study will provide a background for an intensive study of Interstate Compact transfers in Anchorage currently under way. The study involves all active interstate cases in 1985 (N=368) and includes detailed information from offender files. When this study is completed incoming and outgoing offenders can be compared on a variety of bases including: instant offense, prior record, employment history, marital status, educational level, length of supervision, reason in Alaska, etc. We have argued that numbers alone do not provide a valid assessment of the impact on the state of participation in the compact and these other factors will assist in drawing a clearer picture.

We would like to know if the transfers Alaska receives tend to be violent offenders who are a potential danger to the community. We would like to know if they are Alaskans who are "coming home" or if they are residents of other states who appear to be interested in a "new start." We are hoping that the data collected on the Anchorage sample will enable us to make some predictions about the potential these transfers have as rehabili-

tated citizens of the state.

The historical data presented in this paper underscores the problems involved in using case management data for research purposes. In 1984 the Alaska Department of Corrections adopted a management information system, OBSCIS, which is in wide use throughout the country. OBSCIS (Offender-Based State Correctional Information System) is a case management system with a primary purpose of locating and assessing individuals in the system. It does, however, contain many more data points than the prior system and has, therefore, more potential for research and policy decisions. The Department of Corrections should make use of the full potential inherent in the data. The use of case management data to improve case management is obviously important, but OBSCIS provides an opportunity to build a body of information which can be used in policy development, planning and decision-making.

NOTE

<sup>1</sup> In states that have participated since the 1930s this may prove to be the case. Alaska, however, has only participated since 1962.

Figure 1. National Data on Interstate Transfers

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Year <sup>1</sup>	# of Transfers	# States Reporting
1952 <sup>2</sup>	17,000	31
1955 <sup>2</sup>	23,623	42
1960	30,295	41
1964	37,588	46
1969	43,393	49
1973	52,687	36
1976	38,197	36
1980	62,436	36
1984	77,792	35
1986	72,385	34

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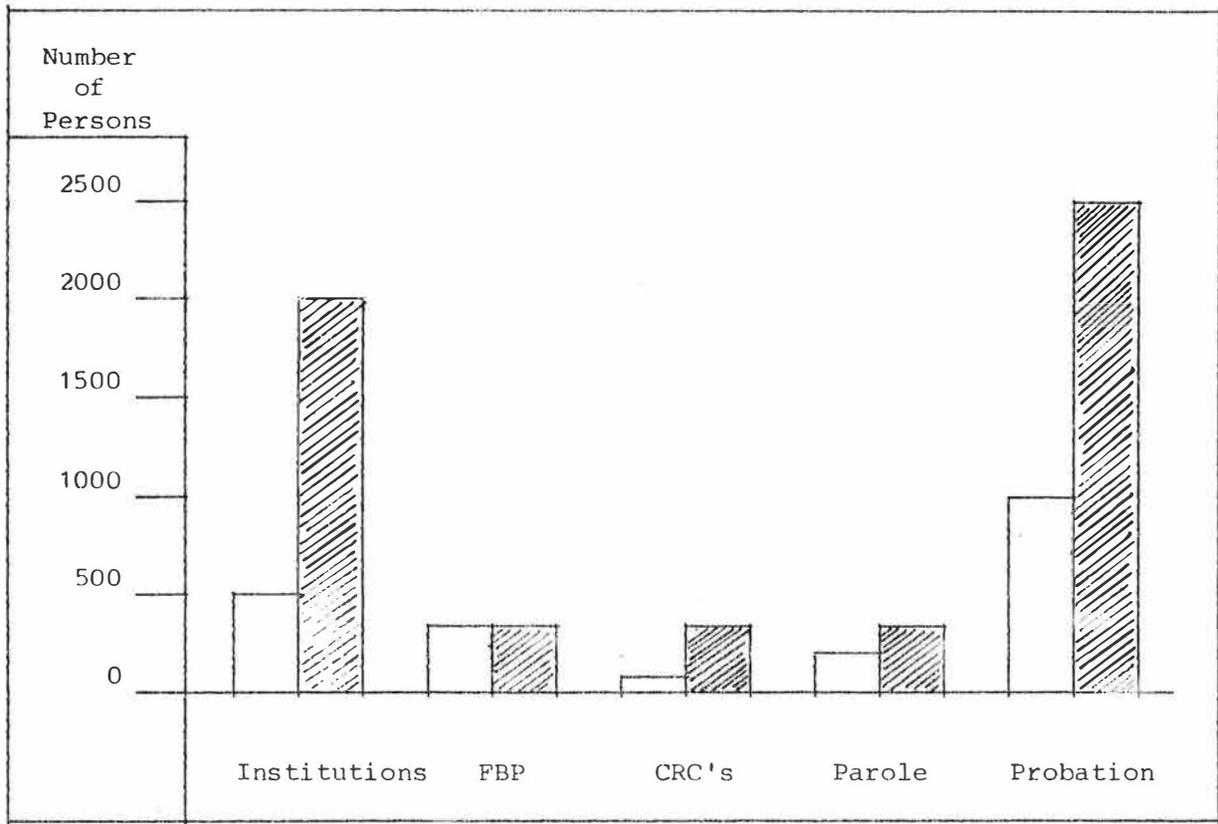
<sup>1</sup> Years were selected on the basis of complete data for all reporting states.

<sup>2</sup> In 1952 and 1956 only 48 states participated in the compact.

Source: Council of State Governments, Lexington, Kentucky.

Figure 2. ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Population Comparisons, 1980 vs. 1985



Source: Alaska Department of Corrections, Annual Report, 1985. Juneau, AK

Figure 3: States with Highest Level of Exchange with Alaska

Original Jurisdiction (Received by Alaska)			Destination (Left Alaska)		
Rank	State	% of Total*	Rank	State	% of Total*
1	Washington	24.6	1	Washington	25.2
2	California	15.8	2	California	17.4
3	Oregon	10.3	3	Oregon	9.2
4	Texas	5.6	4	Texas	6.5
5	Florida	5.1	5	Florida	3.8
6	Montana	4.0	6	Colorado	2.2
Total n=999			Total n=552		

TABLE 4. INTERSTATE COMPACT TRANSFERS BY ALASKA CITY

Incoming			Outgoing		
City	n	% of total	City	n	% of total
Anchorage	482	48.3	Anchorage	258	46.7
Fairbanks	172	17.2	Fairbanks	111	20.1
Kenai	71	7.1	Juneau	53	9.6
Ketchikan	70	7.0	Kenai	37	6.7
Juneau	69	6.9	Ketchikan	35	6.3
Kodiak	45	4.5	Kodiak	29	5.3
Palmer	29	2.9	Palmer	8	1.5
Sitka	17	1.7	Nome	6	1.1
Nome	12	1.2	Sitka	5	0.9
Bethel	11	1.1	Petersburg	3	0.5
Petersburg	7	0.7	Bethel	1	0.2
Haines	4	0.4	Barrow	1	0.2
Wrangell	3	0.3	Not available	5	0.9
Kotzebue	2	0.2			
Dillingham	2	0.2			
Barrow	2	0.2			
Valdez	1	0.1			
	= 999	= 100.0		= 552	= 100.0

TABLE 5 . RATIOS OF INCOMING TO OUTGOING OFFENDERS  
IN ALASKA CITIES

City*	In	:	Out
Anchorage	1.86	:	1.00
Fairbanks	1.55	:	1.00
Juneau	1.30	:	1.00
Kenai	1.89	:	1.00
Ketchikan	2.00	:	1.00
Kodiak	1.55	:	1.00

\* These six cities account for 94.7% of outgoing and 91.0% of incoming interstate transfer participants.

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