

To: Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice

From: Senator Alan Solano, State of South Dakota Legislature

RE: SB 367

Date: January 28, 2016

I am writing to commend the Kansas Legislature for taking on the important issue of juvenile justice reform.

In 2014, Governor Dugaard appointed me to serve on the South Dakota Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Initiative Work Group. Through this process we learned that most committed youth were confined for misdemeanors, probation violations, and status offenses, and that they were staying longer in out-of-home placements than in years past. We also learned that a big part of the problem is that we lacked community-based alternatives to treat youth and to hold them accountable in their own communities. We submitted legislation to address these and other issues and I am happy to report it passed with overwhelming support.

Since the bill was signed into law in March 2015, our state agencies have been working hard to select and train providers to deliver evidence-based programs in the community. They have also developed tools for probation officers to swiftly and effectively address youth behavior before it escalates and have trained our probation officers to use those tools. Our judges now have options they haven't had and we are now poised to keep most youth at home with their families and increase their chances to become productive and contributing adults.

Again, I commend you for leadership in taking these significant steps to improve your juvenile justice system.

Senator Alan Solano