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(S.D.)-State Legislature Begins Tuesday With Governor's Speech



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 01/08/2013 08:56 AM

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) - State lawmakers are ready to start South Dakota's annual legislative session.

The session opens at noon Tuesday with the election of top officers in the House and Senate.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard then will give his annual state of the state speech, which is expected to start at 1 p.m. CST.

The governor's speech is expected to focus on a plan to make sweeping changes in South Dakota's criminal justice system.

A plan submitted by a panel appointed by the governor, Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson and legislative leaders would emphasize locking up dangerous offenders while treating those convicted of nonviolent crimes outside prison walls. Officials say the proposal would slow the growth in prison inmates, allowing the state to avoid building two new prisons in the next few years.