

(S.D.)-State Chief Justice Urges Expansion Of Drug Courts

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Photo: South Dakota State Supreme Court Justice David Gilbertson

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) - South Dakota Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson says courts that treat drug and alcohol offenders outside prison walls should be expanded as part of the effort to cut the state's prison costs.

Gilbertson on Wednesday delivered his annual State of the Judiciary speech to a joint session of the South Dakota House and Senate. He spoke a day after Gov. Dennis Daugaard urged lawmakers to approve a wide-ranging plan to treat more nonviolent offenders outside prison walls.

The chief justice says South Dakota's first drug and alcohol courts have successfully rehabilitated offenders so they can stay in the community, hold jobs and support their families. He says the special courts should be expanded to more communities so South Dakota can avoid building new prisons.