

(S.D.)-SD Legislature Passes Criminal Justice Reform Plan

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PIERRE, S.D. (AP) - The South Dakota Legislature has given final approval to a plan to cut the state's prison costs by treating more nonviolent offenders in community programs.

The House voted 63-7 to pass the bill, which was approved last week by the Senate. The measure now goes to Gov. Dennis Daugaard for his signature.

The measure is based on recommendations made by a panel appointed by the governor, Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson and legislative leaders.

The plan seeks to divert offenders from prison and prevent them from committing future crimes. It would use intensive probation and parole, along with expanded courts to treat drug and alcohol offenders.

Officials say the bill will save about \$162 million over the next decade by avoiding the construction of two new prisons.