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(S.D.)- SD Senate Approves Criminal Justice Reform Plan

By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 01/24/2013 04:02 PM

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

Senators voted 31-2 Thursday to pass the bill and send it to the House for further debate.

The measure is based on recommendations made by a panel appointed by Gov. Dennis Daugaard, 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 if nothing is done to stem a rapid increase in the number of inmates, South Dakota will have to spend \$212 million in the next decade to build and run two new prisons.