

Drug law change urged

JUNEAU—Gov. Jay Hammond Sunday issued a statement urging lawmakers to help battle Alaska's crime by approving this session a bill which would revise the state's drug enforcement laws.

"Our proposal, while both fair and enforceable, should help reduce crime by providing law enforcement agencies in Alaska with more effective tools to combat the growth of illicit drug trafficking ... It is vital that the bill be passed this year," Hammond said in a press release. The Senate-passed measure is in the House Judiciary Committee.

The measure introduced by Sen. Ed Dankworth, R-Anchorage, would make the quantity of drugs in a person's possession a key factor in sentencing. Distribution would be treated more harshly than possession, especially if an adult gives drugs to a minor.

Penalties would be increased for the possession of drugs such as LSD, amphetamines and de-

pressants, and for large amounts of marijuana. The bill would make possession of heroin and cocaine a felony offense—a substantially tougher penalty than under federal law.