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Testimony on SB 497

Thank you Chairman Wanggaard, Vice Chair Vukmir, and members of the committee for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony on this legislation dealing with the use of drones while committing a crime.

Senator Gudex and I introduced this legislation as a companion bill to SB498. The intent is to discourage the use of drones in the commission of a crime. We believe this legislation, combined with SB 498, will help our correctional officers do their jobs more safely and effectively.

This bill enhances existing criminal penalties for crimes if a drone is used as a part of that crime. Under the bill, if the crime is a misdemeanor but not a Class A misdemeanor, the person is subject to a maximum fine of \$10,000, and a maximum term of imprisonment of one year in county jail. If the crime is a Class A misdemeanor, the person is guilty of a felony and subject to a \$10,000 fine and up to two years in prison. If the crime is a felony, the maximum fine for the crime is increased by up to \$5,000 and the maximum term of imprisonment for the crime is increased by up to five years. This penalty enhancement will serve multiple purposes. First, the enhancement will serve to deter other would-be criminals from committing the same crime. Second, giving longer punishments helps to keep the criminals incarcerated and therefore, away from the public.

As the use of drone technology increases, the resourcefulness of criminals also increases. We have all seen recently that Amazon has been conducting testing with drone technology to help deliver their packages. There have been examples we found that include drug dealers who are now using drones to deliver their products to drug users. Criminals will find ways to use technology to their advantage and SB 497 will send a strong message to those individuals.