

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5038

As of January 14, 2009

Title: An act relating to making technical corrections to gender-based terms.

Brief Description: Making technical corrections to gender-based terms.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, King, Keiser, Franklin and Pridemore; by request of Statute Law Committee.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 1/15/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: Since 1983 state law requires that all statutes be written in gender-neutral terms, unless a specification of gender is intended. In 2007 the Legislature passed ESB 5063, an act relating to removing gender references. The act changed gender-specific terms to gender-neutral terms in several chapters of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), including those chapters dealing with firefighters, police officers, bondspersons, and material suppliers.

The Legislature directed the Code Reviser, in consultation with the Statute Law Committee, to develop and implement a plan to correct gender-specific references in the entire RCW. The Code Reviser must make annual legislative recommendations to make the RCW completely gender-neutral by June 30, 2015.

Summary of Bill: Gender-specific terms and references are made gender-neutral in several Titles of the RCW. For example, references to "man" or "men" are changed to "person" or "persons," "councilman" is changed to "councilmember," and "chairman" is changed to "chair." Titles relating to local and state government and insurance are included and are made gender-neutral throughout. Other code sections are included, such as sections that contain business regulations, to modify specific references to "man" or "men."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.