

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5045

As Passed House:
April 6, 2011

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, Conway, Holmquist Newbry, Keiser, Kline, King and Chase;
by request of Statute Law Committee.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Judiciary: 3/9/11, 3/10/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/6/11, 76-21.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amends numerous sections in the code to make them gender-neutral.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Pedersen, Chair; Goodman, Vice Chair; Rodne, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Eddy, Frockt, Kirby, Nealey, Orwall and Roberts.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Shea, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Klippert and Rivers.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

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 Engrossed Senate Bill 5063, an act relating to removing gender references. The Legislature directed the Code Reviser (CR), in consultation with the Statute Law Committee, to implement a plan to correct

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gender-specific references in the entire Revised Code of Washington (RCW). The CR must make annual legislative recommendations to make the RCW 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, chairman is changed to chair, warehouseman is changed to warehouse operator, and the phrase "his or her" is used. In a few sections, other technical changes are made to correct cross-references and correct misspellings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There are over 3,000 sections in the RCW that have gender-specific terms. The CR has been making these changes over a period of time and might be finished in the next two years. During the regular bill drafting process, the CR corrects gender-specific terms and has done so since 1983. However, many sections have not been amended for 40 to 50 years and they still contain old and archaic terms. The CR is careful in making sure there are no substantive changes.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Kyle Thiessen, Statute Law Committee.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.