

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5077

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**As Passed House:**  
April 9, 2013

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

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

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Holmquist Newbry and Keiser; by request of Statute Law Committee).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Judiciary: 3/13/13, 3/19/13 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 4/9/13, 70-22.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Changes gender-specific terms to gender-neutral terms, and makes a variety of other technical corrections, in numerous Titles of the Revised Code of Washington.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Pedersen, Chair; Hansen, Vice Chair; O'Ban, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Goodman, Hope, Jinkins, Kirby, Nealey, Orwall and Roberts.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Klippert and Shea.

**Staff:** Edie Adams (786-7180).

**Background:**

Since 1983 state law requires that all statutes must be written in gender-neutral terms unless a specification of gender is intended. In 2007 legislation was enacted that corrected gender-specific terms in a number of provisions of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). This

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legislation also directed the Office of the Code Reviser, in consultation with the Statute Law Committee, to develop and implement a plan to correct gender-specific references throughout the RCW. The Code Reviser must make annual legislative recommendations to make the RCW gender-neutral by June 30, 2015. Legislation has been enacted in each of the past four sessions changing gender-specific language in numerous provisions of the RCW.

**Summary of Bill:**

Various Titles of the RCW are amended to make gender-specific terms gender-neutral. For example, references to ombudsman are changed to ombuds, chairman is changed to chair, fisherman is changed to fisher, freshman is changed to first-year student, and the phrases "he or she" or "his or her" are used. Other technical changes are made in several sections to correct cross-references and style and grammatical errors, and to update references and terminology.

**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, except for section 43, which takes effect December 1, 2013, after section 42 expires December 1, 2013.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) The Code Reviser's Office has been working on this project since 2007 based on a directive from the Legislature. We found that there were over 3,000 sections of code that had not been amended in many years and that required these changes. We have gotten all the way through the code, so this should be the last large bill correcting gender-specific terms. The bill contains non-controversial changes, similar to the ones made in prior legislation.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Kyle Thiesson, Statute Law Committee.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.