

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5189

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 6, 1997
Ways & Means, February 26, 1997

Title: An act relating to sex offender registration violations.

Brief Description: Increasing penalties for sex offender registration violations.

Sponsors: Senators Goings, Long, Hargrove, Zarelli, Fairley, Schow, Patterson, Oke, Winsley, McCaslin, Rasmussen and Haugen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/29/97, 2/6/97 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/19/97, 2/26/97 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Long, Chair; Zarelli, Vice Chair; Franklin, Hargrove, Kohl, Schow and Stevens.

Staff: Kyle Thiessen (786-7754)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Deccio, Vice Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Bauer, Brown, Fraser, Kohl, Long, Loveland, Rossi, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Swecker and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: Legislation passed in 1996 requires a registered sex offender to notify the county sheriff of a change of address within the county at least 14 days before moving.

Current law also provides that a sex offender required to register who fails to register or who fails to notify the county sheriff when moving is guilty of: (1) a class C felony if the underlying sex offense was a class A felony; or (2) a gross misdemeanor if the underlying sex offense was anything other than a class A felony.

Summary of Bill: Registered sex offenders must notify the county sheriff within 72 hours of moving within the county. The 14-day advance notice for moves outside the county is not changed.

It is a class C felony to fail to register or notify the county sheriff of a move if the underlying sex offense was a felony of any kind, and a gross misdemeanor only if the underlying sex offense was other than a felony. This increases the penalty for failing to register or failing to notify if the underlying sex offense was a class B or C felony or an unclassified felony, and removes the necessity to determine the class of the underlying felony in cases where that is not clear, such as when the felony was an out-of-state conviction.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For (Human Services & Corrections): Prosecutors will prosecute felonies more vigorously than gross misdemeanors. Offenders will take it more seriously. It will be easier to deal with felonies from out of state because there will no longer be a distinction between classes of felonies.

Testimony Against (Human Services & Corrections): None.

Testified (Human Services & Corrections): Dale Brandland, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office (pro); Joseph Beard, Snohomish County Sheriff's Office (pro); Casey Johnson, King County Police Dept. (pro); Roland Weiss, Thurston County Sheriff's Office (pro).

Testimony For (Ways & Means): This will send a clear message that sex offenders must register. It will make the job of law enforcement easier by simplifying the classification of the failure to register offense, and it will enhance public safety.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Calvin Goings, prime sponsor; Joseph Beard, Snohomish County Sheriff's Office; Helen Harlow, Tennis Shoe Brigade; Ed Bush, Chelan Police, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.