

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5301

As of February 3, 1998

Title: An act relating to excessive charges for services because of the customer's gender.

Brief Description: Prohibiting excessive charges for services because of the customer's gender.

Sponsors: Senators Thibaudeau, Anderson, Heavey, Wojahn and Kohl.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 2/18/97; 2/4/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Staff: Traci Ratzliff (786-7452)

Background: The state's law against discrimination directs the Human Rights Commission to investigate and eliminate certain unfair practices based on a person's gender. A person found to have committed an unfair practice may be ordered to stop the practice, to pay actual damages, and to pay up to \$10,000 damages for humiliation and mental suffering.

Among unfair practices enumerated in the law, none explicitly prohibit the practice of charging different prices for a service based on the person's gender. There is concern that the current law does not prevent this practice from occurring.

Summary of Substitute Bill: An individual who directly or indirectly performs a retail personal service, such as hairdressing, barbering, manicuring, dry cleaning or tailoring is required to post a sign visible to all customers that includes the following information: list of services offered; price of services offered; description of conditions or variation in services that alters the price charged for a service; and hourly rate of labor, if price is based upon such a rate. If persons practicing within a single facility charge a different price for each service offered, each practitioner must post a sign with the required information.

A violation of this act is a violation of the Consumer Protection Act.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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