

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5672

As Passed Senate, March 12, 1997

Title: An act relating to drug-free zones in public housing projects.

Brief Description: Authorizing drug-free zones around public housing authority facilities.

Sponsors: Senators Strannigan, Franklin, McCaslin, Benton, Wood, Winsley, Horn, Wojahn, Kline, Kohl and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 3/3/97 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/12/97, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Fairley, Goings, Hargrove, Kline, Long, Stevens and Zarelli.

Staff: Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

Background: Current law declares a number of locations to be drug-free zones. In these zones, the penalties for drug-related crimes are doubled. The locations covered by this law are schools, school bus stops, public parks, public transit vehicles and shelters, and civic centers.

It is felt that a large number of illegal drug transactions occur in or near public housing projects, placing the residents at risk and increasing their general level of fear. However, under current law, they are not eligible for designation as drug-free zones.

Summary of Bill: Public housing projects designated by a local governing authority as drug-free zones are added as a new category to the current list of places where the penalties for drug-related crimes are doubled.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 26, 1997.

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

Testimony For: The criminal element perceives people in public housing as powerless. This bill will protect residents, particularly children, from the dangers associated with drug dealing. This law is an important and effective law enforcement tool. This bill will help improve the image and quality of life in public housing. As the quality of life improves in public housing, it will have a positive impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Strannigan, prime sponsor; Kim Seavy, President, Grandview Residents Council; Peter Low, Grandview Residents Council, Everett Housing Authority; Cathy Schindler, Snohomish County Housing Authority; Dan Anderson, Everett Housing Authority; Tracy Nelson, Westpark Resident Council, Bremerton; Stephen Emm, Bremerton Police, Bremerton Housing Authority.