

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 6708

As Passed Senate, February 12, 1996

Title: An act relating to sex offender registration violations.

Brief Description: Increasing penalties for sex offender registration violations.

Sponsors: Senators Goings, Rasmussen, Winsley, Sheldon, Haugen, Hale, McCaslin, Heavey, Finkbeiner, Hochstatter, McAuliffe and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/30/96, 1/31/96 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/6/96 [DP]
Passed Senate, 2/12/96, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

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

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Long, Moyer, Prentice, Schow, Strannigan, Thibaudeau and Zarelli.

Staff: Andrea McNamara (786-7483)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Cantu, Drew, Finkbeiner, Fraser, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Johnson, Kohl, Long, Moyer, Pelz, Quigley, Roach, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Strannigan, Sutherland, West, Winsley and Wojahn.

Staff: Andrea McNamara (786-7483)

Background: Under current law, sex offenders are required to register with their county sheriffs. The requirement applies to a number of specified sex offenses, including some classified as class A, B, and C felonies, as well as gross misdemeanors.

The current penalties for failing to register are dependent upon the classification of the underlying sex offense: if the underlying conviction is a class A felony, or a federal or out-of-state equivalent to a class A felony, the penalty for failing to register is a class C felony; failure to register for any other classification of sex offense is punishable as a gross misdemeanor.

The maximum allowable punishment for a class C felony is five years in prison, \$10,000 fine, or both. The maximum allowable punishment for a gross misdemeanor is one year in a county jail, \$5,000, or both.

Summary of Bill: The penalty for failing to register as a sex offender is increased from a gross misdemeanor to a class C felony when the underlying sex offense is any class of felony, or a federal or out-of-state conviction that is the equivalent of any class of felony in this state.

When a sex offender who is required to register moves to a new address within the same county, he or she must send written notice of the address change to the county sheriff within 72 hours of moving.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Making the penalty for failing to register consistent between all classes of felonies would address many operational problems faced by officers and prosecutors, such as determining the equivalent classification in Washington for out-of-state convictions. Raising the penalty will increase the deterrence to avoid registering.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified (Human Services & Corrections): Detective L. Quantz, Thurston County Sheriff's Office (pro); Helen Harlow, Tennis Shoe Brigade (pro).

Testified (Ways & Means): Roland Weiss, Thurston County Sheriff's Office (pro); Helen Harlow, Tennis Shoe Brigade (pro).