

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6082

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Judiciary*

Title: An act relating to criminal impersonation of a law enforcement officer.

Brief Description: Defining criminal impersonation of a law enforcement officer.

Sponsor(s): By Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators L. Smith, Nelson and Thorsness).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Judiciary, February 19, 1992, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
JUDICIARY**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 16 members: Representatives Appelwick, Chair; Ludwig, Vice Chair; Padden, Ranking Minority Member; Paris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Belcher; Broback; Forner; Hargrove; Inslee; R. Meyers; H. Myers; Riley; Scott; D. Sommers; Tate; and Vance.

Staff: Margaret Allen (786-7191).

Background: Under current law, criminal impersonation is defined as assuming a false identity, or pretending to be a representative of some person or organization, and doing an act in that pretended capacity with intent to defraud another or for any other unlawful purpose. Arguably the act of impersonation alone is insufficient to support a finding of criminal impersonation. Criminal impersonation is a gross misdemeanor.

There is concern that incidents of impersonating a police officer may jeopardize the public's trust in legitimate law enforcement officers, even though the impersonator may not have acted with intent to defraud or for other unlawful purposes. It has been suggested that the act of impersonating an officer should be restricted further than it is by current law.

Summary of Amended Bill: A current law is amended to create a new crime of criminal impersonation in the second degree, a misdemeanor.

A person is guilty of criminal impersonation in the second degree if he or she claims to be, or creates the impression, that he or she is a law enforcement officer and, under circumstances not amounting to criminal impersonation in the first degree, does something intending to convey the impression that he or she is acting in an official capacity.

The current law is further amended to change the existing crime of criminal impersonation to criminal impersonation in the first degree.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The substitute bill added impersonation of a law enforcement officer to the existing statute defining criminal impersonation. Criminal impersonation of a law enforcement officer was a gross misdemeanor.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: None.