

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2392

C 9 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Adopting recommended prosecuting standards for juvenile charging and plea dispositions.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Corrections (originally sponsored by Representatives Tokuda, Ballasiotes, Chopp, Mason, Wolfe, Radcliff, Poulsen, Schoesler, Veloria, Cooke, Murray, Blanton and Costa).

House Committee on Corrections
Senate Committee on Law & Justice

Background: Prosecutorial Guidelines for Adults. Washington statutes contain non-binding guidelines for prosecutors to follow when prosecuting adult criminal cases. These statutes set out standards regarding (1) prosecutorial decisions to prosecute a case, (2) prosecutorial decisions not to prosecute a case, (3) the proper selection of charges or degree of charges, (4) police investigations, (5) plea dispositions, and (6) sentence recommendations.

Prosecution of Juvenile Cases. Prosecutors must develop their own non-binding filing standards for juvenile cases, and no single uniform set of guidelines exists in statute.

Summary: Prosecutorial Guidelines for Juvenile Cases. The same non-binding prosecutorial guidelines existing for adult criminal cases are placed in statute for juvenile offenses. Minor changes are made in the guidelines to reflect the different terminology used in the juvenile justice system. Language is added that prosecutorial decision-making must not be influenced by considerations of race, gender, religion, or creed.

Pilot Project. A pilot project in two counties is created to track the application of the new guidelines and to monitor the uniformity of prosecutorial decision-making. These counties are to collect data on juvenile criminal prosecutions, including recording the reasons for charging decisions cross-tabulated with offender characteristics such as race, age, and type of crime. Findings from the project are to be reported to the Legislature by December 12, 1996.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96 0
Senate	48 0

Effective: June 6, 1996