

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5903

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, March 5, 2003

Title: An act relating to juvenile offender sentences.

Brief Description: Providing additional sentencing alternatives for juvenile offenders.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove, Stevens and Carlson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/25/03, 3/5/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5903 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Stevens, Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Deccio, Hargrove, McAuliffe and Regala.

Staff: Tony Rugel (786-7754)

Background: It has been suggested that county juvenile courts may be in a better position to determine and deliver sentences in some juvenile criminal cases by retaining the juveniles in the community rather than sending them to a state-operated facility. Proposed alternatives in the juvenile criminal sentencing structure have been suggested as a way of more effectively and efficiently delivering services to youth convicted of crimes.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Two sentencing alternatives are created: a mental health disposition alternative, and a community commitment alternative.

Under the mental health disposition alternative, the court may suspend a disposition of 52 to 65 weeks or less on the condition that the offender comply with a court-ordered mental health treatment plan.

Under the community commitment alternative, the court may order an offender to serve a disposition of 15 to 36 weeks or less in a county detention facility as part of a community reintegration program. At least 50 percent of the disposition must be served in a detention facility.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The proposed substitute removes the suspended disposition alternative. In addition, a juvenile offender must be sentenced to 15 to 36 weeks or less in order to receive a community commitment alternative disposition and at least 50 percent of the sentence must be served in a detention facility.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 20, 2003.

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

Testimony For: The counties are in a better position to determine and deliver sentences for some juveniles by retaining them in local jurisdictions.

Testimony Against: The state-run facilities are better equipped to handle specific needs of juveniles and can deliver a greater number of resources to offenders.

Testified: PRO: Sherry Appleton, WDA/WACDL; Leonard Costello, Superior Court Judges Assoc.; Ned Delmore, Kitsap County Juvenile Court; Daniel Erker, Pierce County Juvenile Court; Pete Peterson, Clallam County Juvenile Court; Bruce Knutson, King County Superior Court; Tom McBride, WA Assoc. of Prosecuting Attorneys; CON: Cheryl Stephani, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration/DSHS.