

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1362

As Reported by House Committee On:
Judiciary

Title: An act relating to conveyances used in prostitution-related offenses.

Brief Description: Concerning conveyances used in prostitution-related offenses.

Sponsors: Representatives Goodman, Rodne, Sullivan, Williams, Orwall, O'Brien, Kirby, Chase and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Judiciary: 1/28/09, 2/9/09 [DPS].

<p>Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows impoundment of conveyances used in prostitution-related offenses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Pedersen, Chair; Goodman, Vice Chair; Rodne, Ranking Minority Member; Shea, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kelley, Kirby, Ormsby, Roberts, Ross and Warnick.

Staff: Courtney Barnes (786-7194)

Background:

Prostitution-Related Offenses.

Patronizing a Prostitute: A person is guilty of patronizing a prostitute if he or she: (1) pays a fee, pursuant to a prior understanding, as compensation for another person having engaged the perpetrator in sexual conduct; (2) pays or agrees to pay another person pursuant to an understanding that the person will engage in sexual conduct with the perpetrator; or (3) solicits or requests another person to engage in sexual conduct with the perpetrator for a fee. Patronizing a prostitute is a misdemeanor.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Prostitution: A person is guilty of prostitution if he or she engages or agrees or offers to engage in sexual conduct with another person for a fee. Prostitution is a misdemeanor.

Promoting Prostitution in the First Degree: A person is guilty of promoting prostitution in the first degree if he or she knowingly advances, or profits from, prostitution by compelling a person to engage in prostitution by threat or force. Promoting prostitution in the first degree is a class B felony.

Promoting Prostitution in the Second Degree: A person is guilty of promoting prostitution in the second degree if he or she knowingly profits from prostitution or advances prostitution. Promoting prostitution in the second degree is a class C felony.

Promoting Travel for Prostitution: A person is guilty of promoting travel for prostitution if he or she knowingly sells or offers to sell travel services that include or facilitate travel for the purpose of engaging in patronizing a prostitute or promoting prostitution. Promoting travel for prostitution is a class C felony.

Commercial Sexual Abuse of a Minor (formerly Patronizing a Juvenile Prostitute): A person is guilty of commercial sexual abuse of a minor if he or she pays or agrees to pay a fee to a minor having engaged in sexual conduct; pays or agrees to pay a fee pursuant to an understanding that the minor will engage in sexual conduct; or solicits, offers, or requests to engage in sexual conduct with a minor in return for a fee. Commercial sexual abuse of a minor is a class C felony.

Promoting Commercial Sexual Abuse of a Minor: A person is guilty of promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor if he or she knowingly advances commercial sexual abuse of a minor or profits from a minor engaged in sexual conduct. Promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor is a class B felony.

Promoting Travel for Commercial Sexual Abuse of a Minor: A person is guilty of promoting travel for commercial sexual abuse of a minor if he or she knowingly sells or offers to sell travel services that include or facilitate travel for the purpose of engaging in conduct that would amount to commercial sexual abuse of a minor or promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor. Promoting travel for commercial sexual abuse of a minor is class C felony.

Vehicle Impoundment.

Upon an arrest for a suspected violation of patronizing a prostitute or commercial sexual abuse of a minor, the arresting law enforcement officer may impound the person's vehicle if: (1) the vehicle was used in the commission of the crime; (2) the person arrested is the owner of the vehicle; and (3) the person arrested has previously been convicted of patronizing a prostitute or commercial sexual abuse of a minor.

The Prostitution Prevention and Intervention Account.

Persons convicted of promoting prostitution in the first or second degree, commercial sexual abuse of a minor, patronizing a prostitute, indecent exposure, prostitution, or permitting

prostitution, are assessed a fee. The fee is deposited into the Prostitution Prevention and Intervention Account, which funds the Prostitution Prevention and Intervention Services Grant Program (Program). The Program provides funding for programs that provide effective prostitution prevention and intervention services, including counseling, parenting, housing relief, education, and vocational training.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Conveyance Impoundment.

A local governing authority may designate areas within which conveyances are subject to impoundment when they are used to facilitate the following prostitution-related offenses: patronizing a prostitute, prostitution, promoting prostitution in the first degree, promoting prostitution in the second degree, promoting travel for prostitution, commercial sexual abuse of a minor, promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor, and promoting travel for commercial sexual abuse of a minor. The arresting law enforcement officer may impound the person's conveyance if: (1) the conveyance was used in the commission of the crime; and (2) the person arrested is the owner of the conveyance. A prior conviction of a prostitution-related offense is a requirement for impoundment if the offense was committed in an undesignated area.

A prior conviction of a prostitution-related offense is not a requirement for impoundment if the offense was committed within a designated area. The designation must be based on evidence indicating that the area has a disproportionately higher number of arrests for prostitution-related offenses compared to other areas within the same jurisdiction of the local governing authority. The local governing authority must post signs at the boundaries of the designated areas to indicate that the area has been designated.

Prior to redeeming an impounded conveyance, the owner must pay all applicable impoundment, towing, and storage fees and an administrative fee of \$500. The administrative fee is paid to the impounding agency that issues a receipt to the owner of the conveyance. To redeem an impounded conveyance, the owner must provide the receipt to the towing company and pay all impoundment, towing, and storage fees. A towing company that relies on a forged receipt to release an impounded conveyance is not liable for any unpaid administrative fee.

In a proceeding to challenge the validity of an impoundment where the claimant substantially prevails, the claimant is entitled to a full refund of the impoundment, towing, and storage fees and the \$500 administrative fee. Any refund made to a prevailing claimant is paid by the impounding authority. The claimant must provide proof of payment prior to receiving a refund.

The Prostitution Prevention and Intervention Account.

The \$500 administrative fee paid to the impounding agency must be deposited into the Prostitution Prevention and Intervention Account.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill removes all provisions related to the forfeiture of conveyances used for prostitution-related offenses involving minors. The substitute bill adds provisions to clarify the procedure when conveyances are impounded for prostitution-related offenses, including how the \$500 administrative fee is paid. The substitute bill adds provisions to clarify that the impounding authority is required to pay any refund of fees if a claimant substantially prevails in a proceeding to challenge the validity of an impoundment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Although prostitution has been brought indoors, there are some public order problems in certain areas. The Legislature should address this public order problem. Under current law, a vehicle can be impounded after an arrest related to prostitution on the second offense. The bill will allow impoundment on the first offense if the prostitution-related offense is committed within a designated zone. The bill will provide funding for the Prostitution Prevention and Intervention Account. Forfeiture is a new feature applicable when a person patronizes a child prostitute. Forfeiture and impoundment on the first offense only applies to the zones where there is data to support that there is a disproportionate public order issue. There is a process for the innocent vehicle owner or community property owner to prevent forfeiture.

The City of Kent strongly supports this bill. The bill gets at the economic underpinning of prostitution without using incarceration. There are three elements of prostitution: tanning parlors, internet-based, and street prostitution. Pacific Highway, which goes through the City of Kent, has a problem with street prostitution. This problem has been around for decades. The people who live near Pacific Highway deserve better. The bill will enable cities, like Kent, to change the status quo. Prostitution drags down the economic development of cities. The bill goes after the market by targeting those who patronize prostitutes. The bill will help cities present a united front. The bill will change the perception that prostitution is tolerated in certain areas. The bill is supported by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and the King County Chiefs Association. The King County sheriff supports the bill as does the police chief of the City of Seatac.

There are a number of youth who are sexually exploited on Pacific Highway. Prostitution is not a victimless time. It takes time and resources to get sexually exploited youth off the streets and for them to recover from the trauma of sexual abuse. The bill provides an additional deterrent from the customer side of prostitution.

(With concerns) There is concern with language in forfeiture sections of the bill that allows seizure without process. This language would allow a law enforcement officer to seize a conveyance if the officer has probable cause to believe that the conveyance is subject to forfeiture. This language violates the U.S. Constitution and the Washington Constitution. Warrantless seizures are unfavorable and may lead to constitutional challenges. This language also appears in the drug forfeiture statutes in the Revised Code of Washington, which was modeled after federal drug forfeiture statutes. The U.S. Congress has amended this language in the federal drug forfeiture statutes. The language of this bill should also be amended to remove the constitutional infirmity.

The Towing and Recovery Association of Washington and the Association of Registered Tow Truck Operators have technical concerns with the bill as drafted. With regard to the impoundment, the impoundment section of the bill should reference the chapter governing impoundments in the Revised Code of Washington. Additionally, the order for impound should clearly state that the impounded vehicle has a \$500 hold. The towing companies do not want to handle the \$500 administrative fee. The towing companies want an official document stating that the \$500 administrative fee has been paid before releasing a vehicle. The towing companies want clarification that a claimant who substantially prevails in a proceeding to challenge an impoundment may receive a refund from the impounding agency. If the intention is to impound a vehicle and hold it pending the outcome of the forfeiture proceeding, the vehicles should be towed to the police impound lot.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Goodman, prime sponsor; Doug Levy, cities of Kent and Federal Way; Steve Strachan, Kent Police Department; James Graddon, King County Sheriff's Department and City of SeaTac Police Department; and Katalin Hausback, Auburn Youth Services.

(With concerns) Robert Quillian, Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the Washington Defenders Association; and Stu Halsan, Towing and Recovery Association of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.