

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6134

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, January 29, 1996

Title: An act relating to prostitution.

Brief Description: Increasing the penalties for repeated prostitution-related offenses.

Sponsors: Senators Fairley and Kohl.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/23/96, 1/29/96 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6134 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Goings, Hargrove, Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin, Roach and Schow.

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Background: A person can be convicted of prostitution, permitting prostitution, or patronizing a prostitute multiple times and the classification of the crime remains a misdemeanor. The penalty for a misdemeanor is imprisonment for up to 90 days or a fine of not more than \$1,000 or both. The penalty for a gross misdemeanor is imprisonment for up to one year or a fine of not more than \$5,000 or both. There is concern that people become locked in a cycle of prostituting themselves to make money to buy drugs, using the drugs, needing more drugs and therefore again prostituting themselves. It is believed that the longer imprisonment period associated with a gross misdemeanor would allow the state to hold on to a person convicted for a third time of prostitution for a longer period of time with the possible result of breaking the cycle.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A third or subsequent conviction of prostitution within five years is a gross misdemeanor. Permitting prostitution is also a gross misdemeanor upon the third conviction within five years. A person is guilty of a gross misdemeanor on the third conviction within five years of patronizing a prostitute.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will make the price of "doing business" more expensive. The cost of this bill to the counties is probably very small but cumulatively it is greater. It is necessary to keep that in mind.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Robert Thompson, Des Moines Police Department; Detective James Covey, King Co. Police Department; Curt Sharar, WA State Association of Counties.