

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1389

As Passed House
March 13, 1993

Title: An act relating to work crews for offenders.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to work crews.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Corrections (originally sponsored by Representative Riley.)

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Corrections, March 3, 1993, DPS;
Passed House, March 13, 1993, 92-1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Long, Ranking Minority Member; G. Cole; L. Johnson; Ogden; Riley; and Padden.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background: Under the determinate sentencing laws, intermediate punishment options available to judges include partial confinement for felons sentenced for less than one year. Partial confinement refers to the use of non-jail punishment such as home detention, work release or participation in inmate work crews.

Inmate work crews provide labor in low skilled and labor intensive projects such as picking up litter in parks and along roadways or landscaping. Inmate work crews vary in size depending on the nature of the project, available transportation and amount of available trained supervision. Inmate work crew programs have been used by local jails to relieve jail crowding, reduce inmate idleness, reduce inmate tension and mischief, and provide inmates with a meaningful work experience. In addition, offender work crews are used to help local county governments operate more cost effectively by providing low cost labor on civic projects.

Civic improvement tasks conducted by the work crew must not negatively impact the local labor force, existing private industries, or people with developmental disabilities contracted through a sheltered workshop. Any disputes arising because of concerns about negative effects on the labor force, or local private industries, may be referred to the director of the Department of Labor and Industries for arbitration. Work crew participants must abstain from alcohol and controlled substances, perform adequate work, and maintain a verifiable residence. Work crew programs can accept or reject participants. Offenders convicted of sex crimes cannot participate in the work crew program.

All work crew programs are required to limit jobs to unskilled labor on public lands and private land, owned or operated by a nonprofit entity, or on private property to conduct emergency snow removal only.

Summary of Bill: Both state and county offender work crews are allowed to perform civic improvement tasks for the benefit of the community without restriction to ownership of the property where the work is performed.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The bill will allow the counties greater opportunities to assist disabled, elderly, and other people who may need this type of help.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Kurt Sharar, Washington State Association of Counties (pro).