

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2202

As Passed House
February 8, 1994

Title: An act relating to the indeterminate sentence review board.

Brief Description: Limiting the indeterminate sentence review board's power to change confinements.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Corrections (originally sponsored by Representatives Ballasiotes, Campbell, Wood, Ballard, Foreman, Kessler, Dyer, Reams, Forner, Brough, Edmondson, Cooke, Chandler, Johanson and Lisk).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Corrections, January 19, 1994, DPS;
Appropriations, February 2, 1994, DPS(COR);
Passed House, February 8, 1994, 94-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Mastin, Vice Chair; Long, Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; G. Cole; L. Johnson; Ogden; and Padden.

Staff: Rick Neidhardt (786-7841).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Corrections be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes; Basich; Cooke; Dellwo; Dunshee; Foreman; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Leonard; Linville; H. Myers; Peery; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Stevens; Talcott; Wang; Wineberry and Wolfe.

Staff: John Woolley (786-7154).

Background: Indeterminate Sentence Review Board. The indeterminate sentence review board plays a role in determining the length of confinement for crimes committed prior to July 1, 1984. The board is not involved in the sentencing for any crimes committed on or after that date.

Imposition of Indeterminate Sentences. Crimes committed before July 1, 1984, are punished through indeterminate sentences. Unlike the sentencing scheme in place for crimes committed since that date, indeterminate sentences do not specify the exact length of confinement at the time of sentencing. Rather, indeterminate sentencing involves setting a minimum term and a maximum term of confinement. The actual length of confinement depends on the offender's conduct in prison and the offender's progress toward rehabilitation.

The maximum term of an indeterminate sentence is set by the court that convicted the offender. Since 1986, the court also sets the minimum term. The minimum sentence was previously set by a parole board.

The indeterminate sentence review board has the authority to review, refix and redetermine the court's minimum term order. This usually occurs in two situations. First, it can occur when the board determines an inmate is not parolable at the end of the minimum term, requiring the board to add additional time to the minimum term. Second, additional time can be added to a minimum term if the offender commits infractions while in confinement.

Sentencing for Multiple Crimes. When multiple crimes are being sentenced at one time, the sentencing court (or before 1986, the parole board) originally chose whether to impose the terms of sentence concurrently or consecutively. Consecutive sentences are served one after the other; concurrent sentences are served simultaneously. The sentencing court is given discretion in making this decision.

The Washington State Supreme Court has held in in re Irwin, 110 Wn.2d 175 (1988), that the board must exercise its own discretion when addressing the concurrent/consecutive issue. Even when the sentencing court orders consecutive terms, the board cannot automatically impose consecutive terms. The board must instead take into account not only the appropriate sentence under the old indeterminate sentencing system, but also must attempt to make decisions that are reasonably consistent with (1) the sentences that would have been imposed under the more recent Sentencing Reform Act and (2) the recommendations of the court and prosecutor. Thus, when the Sentencing Reform Act would impose concurrent

terms, the board must do so as well unless it articulates an adequate aggravating factor to justify consecutive terms.

Summary of Bill: The indeterminate sentence review board may not change or modify the concurrent or consecutive structure of any sentence as set by the sentencing court.

The bill contains a severability clause.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (Corrections) A sentencing court's decision to impose consecutive or concurrent sentences should not be subject to modification at a later date. Prior to Irwin, the board did not alter this aspect of a sentence.

(Appropriations) None.

Testimony Against: (Corrections) None.

(Appropriations) None.

Witnesses: (Corrections) Representative Ballasiotes (in favor); Kathryn Bail, Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (favors bill with amendment to clarify language).

(Appropriations) None.