

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2611

As Reported By House Committee On:
Corrections

Title: An act relating to registration of sex offenders.

Brief Description: Increasing the penalty for certain persons who fail to register as sex offenders.

Sponsors: Representatives Johanson, Morris, Long, Heavey, Eide, Appelwick, Forner, Brumsickle, Shin, Campbell, Sheldon, Quall, Jones, Brough, Schoesler, Moak, Kremen, Silver, Kessler, L. Thomas, Springer, Tate, Mielke, Cooke, Van Luven, Talcott, Reams and Chandler.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Corrections, February 3, 1994, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Mastin, Vice Chair; Long, Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; G. Cole; L. Johnson; Moak; Ogden and Padden.

Staff: Rick Neidhardt (786-7841).

Background: Under current law, adult and juvenile sex offenders must register in the county where they live. The law does not expressly prohibit a sex offender from registering simultaneously in more than one county.

Law enforcement agencies have experienced difficulty keeping track of sex offenders who register in more than one county.

Under current law, violating the registration requirement is a Class C felony if the sex offense was a Class A felony. The violation is a gross misdemeanor if the sex offense was other than a Class A felony.

A Class C felony has a maximum punishment of five years' confinement and a fine of \$10,000. When violation of the registration requirement is a Class C felony, the crime is assigned a standard sentence range of zero to 12 months.

A gross misdemeanor has a maximum punishment of one year's confinement and a fine of \$5,000 dollars.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The bill prohibits sex offenders from being registered in more than one county. Sex offenders must register in the county of their primary residence.

Violation of the registration requirement is a Class C felony regardless of the seriousness of the underlying sex offense.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill stated that a sex offender shall not register in more than one county. The substitute bill replaced the term "register" with "be registered." This was done to more accurately express the bill's intent.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Law enforcement agencies have experienced difficulty in locating sex offenders who are simultaneously registered in more than one county. Prohibiting simultaneous registration meets the original intent underlying the registration act. The costs involved in passing this bill will be less than the costs that will result from not acting. Seventeen people are currently registered both in Snohomish County and King County. Most sex offenses are committed against children, and our children need greater protection. The crime of violating the registration requirements should in all cases be a Class C felony. Felony warrants are acted on more quickly than are misdemeanor warrants.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Jim Johanson, prime sponsor (pro); Brian Levesque (pro); Dan LaRouch, Douglas County Sheriff/WASPC (pro); and Tom McBride, Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (pro).