

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1689

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE, MARCH 24, 1993

Brief Description: Making it a misdemeanor to impersonate a law enforcement officer.

SPONSORS: Representatives Chappell, Springer, Appelwick, Riley, Campbell, Brough, Basich, J. Kohl and Johanson

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators A. Smith, Chairman; Hargrove, McCaslin, Nelson, Niemi, Roach, and Spanel.

Staff: Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

Hearing Dates: March 24, 1993

BACKGROUND:

A person can commit the crime of criminal impersonation in either of two ways. First, the crime may be committed by assuming a false identity and acting with an unlawful purpose. Second, the crime may be committed by pretending to be a representative of another person and acting with an unlawful purpose. The crime is a gross misdemeanor.

SUMMARY:

The crime of criminal impersonation is amended to include two degrees. The existing crime is designated first-degree criminal impersonation.

The new crime of second-degree criminal impersonation is created. The crime is committed by claiming to be, or creating the impression that one is, a law enforcement officer and, under circumstances not amounting to the first-degree crime, acting with the intent to convey the impression that one is acting in an official capacity.

The second-degree crime is a misdemeanor.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

Explicit language is added to the bill to ensure that no crime is committed unless a reasonable person would believe that the person was a law enforcement officer.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

When people pretend to be law enforcement officers, it creates a dangerous situation for both the victim and the person who is pretending to be a police officer. For instance, the person who is stopped in his car may use a firearm to defend himself.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Chappell, prime sponsor