

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1309

As Reported By House Committee On:
Law & Justice

Title: An act relating to disarming an officer.

Brief Description: Creating the crime of disarming a law enforcement officer.

Sponsors: Representatives Mielke, Mulliken, Sterk, McMorris, Pennington, Bush, Doumit, McDonald, Boldt, Thompson, Costa and Dunn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 2/7/97, 2/11/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; McDonald, Vice Chairman; Sterk, Vice Chairman; Costa, Ranking Minority Member; Constantine, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carrell; Cody; Kenney; Lambert; Lantz; Radcliff; Sherstad and Skinner.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background: A person may be charged with a variety of crimes if the person assaults, murders, or attacks a police officer or corrections officer, or tries to interfere with the officer's performance of official duties. For example, a person could be charged with murder if the person shot and killed the officer, or assault in the first degree if the officer did not die. If the person commits an assault in the fourth degree, which is the least serious of the assault crimes, that crime is elevated to a class C felony when committed against an officer who is performing official duties when assaulted. A person could also be charged with obstructing a law enforcement officer under certain circumstances.

There is not a specific crime that prohibits removing or attempting to remove a firearm from an officer.

Summary of Bill: A new crime of disarming a law enforcement or corrections officer is created. A person commits this crime if the person knowingly removes a firearm or other weapon from a law enforcement or corrections officer, or deprives

the officer of the use of the weapon, when the officer is performing official duties, does not consent to the removal, and the person has reasonable cause to know or knows that the individual is a law enforcement or corrections officer.

Disarming a law enforcement or corrections officer is a class C felony unless the firearm is discharged when the person removes the firearm, in which case the offense is a class B felony.

A person who commits the crime of disarming a law enforcement or corrections officer may be charged with other applicable crimes.

The crime does not apply if the officer is engaged in felonious conduct.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Disarming of a police officer creates a very dangerous situation. Current law is inadequate to deal with this problem.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Mielke, prime sponsor; and Captain Marsh Pugh, Washington State Patrol (pro).