

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2008

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As of February 16, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to persons who patronize prostitutes.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing law enforcement officers to impound the vehicles of persons who are patronizing prostitutes.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Representatives Sheahan, Sterk, Crouse and Costa).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Law & Justice: 3/31/97, 2/18/98.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

**Staff:** Lidia Mori (786-7755)

**Background:** It is felt that most law enforcement efforts aimed at preventing prostitution are directed at punishing prostitutes. However, the economic basis for prostitution lies in the demand for sexual services, often from persons who use motor vehicles in order to solicit and obtain those services.

The use of motor vehicles in patronizing prostitutes contributes to safety and other concerns in residential neighborhoods. It also negatively impacts commercial areas.

When a law enforcement officer arrests the driver of a vehicle who is patronizing a prostitute, the officer may take custody of the vehicle and provide for its removal to a place of safety. A person whose vehicle has been impounded may redeem the vehicle by paying the costs of towing and storage. In addition, the person may request a hearing in district court to determine the validity of the impoundment.

**Summary of Bill:** A law enforcement officer who arrests and takes into custody a person for patronizing a prostitute or patronizing a juvenile prostitute may impound the vehicle if the vehicle is owned by the person arrested and was used in committing the crime.

Impoundments must be performed in accordance with current state law regarding towing and impoundment.

If the person arrested for patronizing a prostitute or a juvenile prostitute is not subsequently convicted of the crime, the law enforcement agency that ordered the impoundment of the person's vehicle is liable for all costs of the impoundment, including towing and storage costs.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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