

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5019

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, February 17, 1997

Title: An act relating to persistent sex offenders.

Brief Description: Expanding the definition of persistent sex offenders.

Sponsors: Senators Fairley, Winsley, Oke and Spanel.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/21/97, 2/17/97 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5019 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Johnson, Vice Chair; Fairley, Goings, Haugen, Kline, Long, McCaslin, Stevens and Zarelli.

Staff: Mychal Schwartz (786-7444)

Background: Sentencing laws define a "persistent offender" as an offender who has three separate felony convictions for a most serious offense. In general, the term "most serious offense" includes convictions for a violent crime, a crime committed with a deadly weapon, or a crime committed with sexual motivation. The sentence for a persistent offender is mandatory life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

It has been suggested that offenders convicted of a sex offense involving a victim who is a minor should be classified as persistent offenders after two separate convictions for such an offense. The concern is that victims of these offenses are particularly vulnerable, and it is disputed whether the behavior of such offenders can be modified to make it safe for them to be released back into the community.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The definition of "persistent offender" is amended to include an offender who has two separate convictions for a most serious offense that is also a sex offense involving a victim who is a minor.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 1997.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: No one.