

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5081

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, March 3, 1997

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: Senators Kohl, McCaslin, Long, Hargrove, Franklin, Winsley, Goings and Patterson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/28/97, 3/3/97 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Fairley, Goings, Hargrove, Haugen, Kline, Long and McCaslin.

Staff: Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

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.

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 towing and impoundment laws.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill is permissive and only applies to vehicles owned by wrongdoers. A similar ordinance has worked well in Portland. The embarrassment factor is a deterrent.

Prostitution and the various activities that accompany it are a blight on a neighborhood. The driving by patrons of prostitutes poses a menace in itself.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Jeanne Kohl, prime sponsor (pro); Bert Musgrove, Seattle (pro).