

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6517

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, January 27, 1998

Title: An act relating to deadly weapon sentence enhancements.

Brief Description: Making the deadly weapon sentencing enhancement the same as the firearm sentencing enhancement.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Benton, Hochstatter, Rossi, Goings, Johnson, Sellar, Snyder, Zarelli, Horn, McDonald, McCaslin, Strannigan, Oke, Fraser, Schow, Swecker, Deccio and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/22/98, 1/27/98 [DP, DNP].
Ways & Means: 2/5/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Johnson, Vice Chair; Goings, McCaslin, Stevens and Zarelli.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley and Kline.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: In 1995, Senate Initiative 159, "Hard Time for Armed Crime," was passed and signed into law. Sentence enhancements for crimes committed with a firearm or other deadly weapons were lengthened.

The enhancements now apply to all felony convictions, with the exception of a few crimes that necessarily involve a firearm. The sentence for a crime committed while armed with a firearm is enhanced by an additional five years for a class A felony, three years for a class B felony, and 18 months for a class C felony. The sentence for a crime committed while armed with a deadly weapon is enhanced by an additional two years for a class A felony, one year for a class B felony, and six months for a class C felony.

No earned early release time is allowed on the enhanced portion of the sentence and the sentence enhancement cannot be served concurrently with any other sentence. The enhancements are doubled for repeat offenders.

Summary of Bill: The sentence enhancements for crimes committed while armed with a firearm or with any deadly weapon are the same. Sentences are enhanced by an additional five years for a class A felony, three years for a class B felony, and 18 months for a class C felony.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 1998.

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

Testimony For: Anything that kills is a deadly weapon. No matter what the weapon, you are just as dead. Violent criminals must be brought to justice and punished.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Maggie Warren, Cris Owsley, Barbara Eacret, SAFER; Tom McBride, Washington State Prosecutors Association.