

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6071

As Passed Senate, February 11, 2000

Title: An act relating to duties of drivers involved in accidents.

Brief Description: Increasing penalties for hit and run where an injury or death occurs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators Rossi, Johnson, McCaslin, T. Sheldon and Oke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/31/2000, 2/3/2000 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/11/2000, 45-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6071 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Heavey, Chair; Kline, Vice Chair; Costa, Goings, Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin and Roach.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: A vehicle operator involved in an accident is required to stop at the scene of the accident and remain there until the operator provides required information and renders reasonable assistance to injured persons. Failure to comply is a gross misdemeanor if the accident only resulted in damage to property. If a person is injured or killed, failure to stop is a class C felony ranked at level IV on the sentencing grid.

Summary of Bill: In the case of an accident resulting in death, the vehicle operator who does not remain at the scene to provide information and reasonable assistance is guilty of a class B felony ranked at level IX on the sentencing grid. Juveniles who commit the offense are guilty of a B+ offense.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 25, 2000.

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

Testimony For: Hit and run accidents causing death should be treated more seriously than those involving injury or property damage. These drivers exhibit the ultimate in selfishness, putting their possible legal liability ahead of the value of human life.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Rossi, prime sponsor; Susan Sergojan, Mothers Against Drunk Driving; Jerry Rempfer, Charolette Rempfer, Dan Satterberg, King County Prosecuting Attorney.

House Amendment(s): The adult offense is ranked at level VIII (21 to 27 months for a first offense) in the House amendment, lowering the period of incarceration from level IX (31 to 41 months for a first offense). The juvenile offense remains the same. The House amendment contains a null and void clause.