

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1280

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Judiciary, March 27, 2001

Title: An act relating to ranking the crime of hit and run.

Brief Description: Increasing the seriousness ranking for hit and run death.

Sponsors: By Representatives Simpson, Ballasiotes, O'Brien, Cairnes, Lovick, Santos, Armstrong, Campbell and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 3/26/01, 3/27/01 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Constantine, Vice Chair; Costa, Hargrove, Kastama, Long and Thibaudeau.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator McCaslin.

Staff: Lilah Amos (786-7421)

Background: Drivers are required to stop and remain at the scene of any accident and provide relevant identification and insurance information and render reasonable assistance to an injured person. Failure to comply is a gross misdemeanor if the accident results only in damage to the other attended vehicle or other property. If a person is injured, failure to stop and remain is a class C felony, seriousness level IV. In 2000, this law was changed to provide that failure to stop and remain at the scene of an accident resulting in death constitutes a class B felony, seriousness level VIII. For a crime categorized as seriousness level VIII, a standard range sentence for a person with no criminal history is from 21-27 months. A person with an offender score of 9, which is the high end of the sentencing range, has a standard sentencing range of 108-144 months.

Summary of Bill: In the case of a motor vehicle accident resulting in death, a vehicle operator who does not remain at the scene of an accident to provide information and reasonable assistance is guilty of a class B felony ranked at seriousness level IX on the sentencing grid. A standard range sentence for a person with no felony criminal history is increased to 31-41 months incarceration. The high end of the standard sentencing range, applicable to persons with an offender score of 9, is 129-171 months.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Under current law a person who commits vehicular homicide when under the influence of alcohol and who leaves the scene of the accident will spend less time in prison than a person in the same circumstance who remains at the scene of the accident. Penalties should be the same for both vehicular homicide involving intoxication and for a hit-and-run accident resulting in death. This change would remove the incentive for leaving the scene of an accident resulting in death.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Simpson, prime sponsor.