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**Criminal Justice & Corrections  
Committee**

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**SSB 5628**

**Brief Description:** Changing threshold property values for crimes against property.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators Brandland, Esser, Kline and Kohl-Welles; by request of Sentencing Guidelines Commission).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Increases the dollar threshold values for the property crimes of malicious mischief, theft, unlawful issuance of checks or drafts, theft of rental or leased property, and possessing stolen property.

**Hearing Date:** 3/21/03

**Staff:** Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

**Background:**

The penalties for property crimes are generally based on the actual value of the property stolen or damaged.

Malicious mischief. A person who knowingly and maliciously causes physical damage to the property of another is guilty of malicious mischief. The degree of the crime depends, in part, on the value of the property destroyed. If the property has a value of over \$1,500, the person is guilty of malicious mischief in the first degree (class B felony, seriousness level II). If the property has a value of over \$250, but not exceeding \$1,500, the person is guilty of malicious mischief in the second degree (class C felony, seriousness level I). If the property has a value exceeding \$50, but not over \$250, the person is guilty of malicious mischief in the third degree (gross misdemeanor). If the property has a value of \$50 or less than the person is also guilty of malicious mischief in the third degree (a misdemeanor).

Theft. A person who steals property or services is guilty of theft. The degree of the crime depends, in part, on the value of the property or services stolen. If the property or services has a value of over \$1,500, the person is guilty of theft in the first degree (class B felony, seriousness level II). If the property or services has a value of over \$250, but not exceeding

\$1,500, or the theft involves the theft of a motor vehicle valued at less than \$1,500, the person is guilty of theft in the second degree (class C felony, seriousness level I). If the property or services has a value of \$250 or less, the person is guilty of theft in the third degree (gross misdemeanor).

Unlawful issuance of checks or drafts. A person who intentionally defrauds, makes, draws, or delivers to another person a bank check, knowing that he or she does not have sufficient funds or credit with a bank, is guilty of unlawful issuance of checks or drafts. When a series of unlawful checks are cashed that are considered part of a common scheme or plan, and the total value of all the transactions has a value greater than \$250, the person is guilty of a class C felony offense of unlawful issuance of a check or draft. If the total value of all the transactions has a value of \$250 or less, the person is guilty of a gross misdemeanor offense of unlawful issuance of a check or draft.

Theft of rental, leased, or lease-purchased property. A person who, with intent, wrongfully obtains or deceitfully gains control of personal property that is rented or leased from another person, is guilty of theft of rental, leased, or lease-purchase property. Theft of rental, leased, or lease-purchased property is a: class B felony if the rental, leased, or lease-purchased property is valued at \$1,500 or more; class C felony if the rental, leased, or lease-purchased property is valued at \$250 or more, but less than \$1,500; and gross misdemeanor if the rental, leased, or lease-purchased property is valued at less than \$250.

Possessing stolen property. A person who knowingly receives, retains, possesses, conceals, or disposes of stolen property (other than a firearm) knowing that it has been stolen is guilty of possessing stolen property. Possessing stolen property is a: class B felony if the value of the stolen property exceeds \$1,500 in value; class C felony if the value of the property stolen exceeds \$250 in value but does not exceed \$1,500 in value, or if the person possesses a stolen motor vehicle valued at less than \$1,500; gross misdemeanor if the value of the stolen property does not exceed \$250 in value.

### **Summary of Bill:**

The monetary threshold values for certain property crimes are increased.

Malicious mischief. The threshold values for malicious mischief crimes are increased to the following: if the property has a value of over \$2,500, the person is guilty of malicious mischief in the first degree; if the property has a value of over \$750, but not exceeding \$2,500, the person is guilty of malicious mischief in the second degree; if the property has a value of less than \$750, the person is guilty of malicious mischief in the third degree, a gross misdemeanor offense.

Theft. The threshold values for theft crimes are increased to the following: if the property or services has a value of over \$2,500, the person is guilty of theft in the first degree; if the property or services has a value of over \$750, but not exceeding \$2,500, or the theft involves the theft of a motor vehicle valued at less than \$2,500, the person is guilty of theft in the second degree; if the property or services has a value of \$750 or less, the person is guilty of theft in the third degree.

Unlawful issuance of checks or drafts. The threshold values for the unlawful issuance of checks or draft crimes when they are considered part of a common scheme or plan, are increased to the following: if the total value of all the transactions is greater than \$750, the person is guilty of a class C felony offense; if the total value of all the transactions has a value of \$750 or less, the person is guilty of a gross misdemeanor offense.

Theft of rental, leased, or lease-purchased property. The threshold values for the theft of rental, leased, or lease-purchase property crimes are increased. Theft of rental, leased, or lease-purchased property is a: class B felony if the rental, leased, or lease-purchased property is valued at \$2,500 or more; class C felony if the rental, leased, or lease-purchased property is valued at \$750, but less than \$2,500; gross misdemeanor if the rental, leased, or lease-purchased property is valued at less than \$750.

Possessing stolen property. The threshold value for possessing stolen property crimes are increased. Possessing stolen property is a: class B felony if the value of the stolen property exceeds \$2,500 in value; class C felony if the value of the property stolen exceeds \$750 in value but does not exceed \$2,500 in value, or if the person possesses a stolen motor vehicle valued at less than \$2,500; gross misdemeanor if the value of the stolen property does not exceed \$750 in value.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 14, 2003.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.