

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6406

As Reported by House Committee On:
Criminal Justice & Corrections

Title: An act relating to assault of a child in the second degree.

Brief Description: Including assault of a child in the second degree in the list of two-strike offenses.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Stevens, Doumit, McAuliffe, Regala, Rasmussen, Benton and Oke; by request of Attorney General).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 2/17/06, 2/23/06 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Adds Assault of a Child in the second degree with sexual motivation to the list of "two-strikes" offenses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives O'Brien, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Pearson, Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kirby, Strow and Williams.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

I. Assault of a Child in the Second Degree with Sexual Motivation

A person commits Assault of a Child in the second degree with sexual motivation if he or she, with sexual motivation:

- commits Assault in the second degree against a child under 13; or
- intentionally assaults a child under 13, causes bodily harm to the child, and has previously engaged in a pattern or practice of abuse of the child.

II. Two Strikes

In 1996, the Legislature passed SHB 2320, otherwise known as the "two-strikes" law, which imposed a life sentence upon certain repeat sex offenders. Under SHB 2320, an offender convicted of a second "two-strikes" offense must be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of release.

Offenses that are strikes under the "two-strikes" law include:

- Child Molestation in the first degree;
- Indecent liberties (with forcible compulsion);
- Rape in the first degree;
- Rape in the second degree;
- Rape of a Child (statutory rape) in the first degree; and
- Rape of a Child (statutory rape) in the second degree.

Any of the following crimes if committed with sexual motivation:

- Assault in the first degree;
- Assault in the second degree;
- Assault of a Child in the first degree;
- Burglary in the first degree;
- Homicide by Abuse;
- Kidnapping in the first degree;
- Kidnapping in the second degree;
- Murder in the first degree; and
- Murder in the second degree.

II. Determinate-Plus Sentencing

An offender convicted of a two-strikes offense is subject to "determinate-plus sentencing." A court must sentence such an offender to a minimum term and a maximum term. The minimum term is generally equal to the standard range sentence. The maximum term, for a "two-strikes" offense is life.

The Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (ISRB) must evaluate the offender prior to the expiration of the minimum term. The ISRB must order the release of the offender upon expiration of the minimum term unless the offender is likelier than not to commit a sex offense if released. If the ISRB does not release the offender, it must re-evaluate the offender at least once every two years up to the offenders maximum term. If the ISRB releases the offender, the offender will be on community custody status for the remainder of his or her maximum term.

Summary of Bill:

Assault of a Child in the second degree with sexual motivation is added to the list of "two-strikes" offenses. The crime is also made a class A felony and a "determinate-plus" offense, just like all other two-strikes offenses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except for section 2, which because of prior double amendments, takes effect on July 1, 2006.

Testimony For: Under the current law, Assault in the second degree with sexual motivation is a strike, but Assault of a Child in the second degree with sexual motivation is not. This bill closes this loophole.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Todd Bowers, Office of the Attorney General.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.