

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5148

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Repealing the crime of "slander of a woman."

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Kline, Fairley and Carrell.

Senate Committee on Judiciary

House Committee on Judiciary

Background: It is illegal to maliciously make a false or defamatory statement about any female who is at least twelve years of age and who is not a "common prostitute" if the statement injures her reputation for virtue or chastity or exposes her to hatred, contempt, or ridicule. Violation of the statute is a misdemeanor.

The statement is presumed to be malicious unless it is justified. The affirmative defense of justification is proven when the statement is "true and fair," and was spoken "with good motives and for justifiable ends."

The testimony of the woman slandered that the slanderous statement was made is insufficient to support a conviction unless there is additional corroborating evidence.

Summary: Slander of a woman is no longer a crime in Washington. The statute criminalizing slander of a woman, and the statute requiring corroboration of the victim's claim that the statement was made in order to convict of the crime, are each repealed.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	1
House	69	28

Effective: July 24, 2005