

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5323

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Judiciary, February 3, 2005

Title: An Act Relating to Threshold Property Values for Crimes Against Property

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

Sponsors: Senators Kline, Esser, Hargrove, Carrell, Stevens, Regala, Fairley, Thibaudeau and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/19/04, 2/3/05 [DP]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Johnson, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Esser, Hargrove, McCaslin and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The monetary amounts differentiating the various degrees of property crimes in this state were established in 1975 when the Washington Criminal Code was first established. They have never been adjusted. For comparison, \$250 in 1975 is equivalent to approximately \$800 now and \$1,500 in 1975 dollars is equivalent to over \$5,000 now.

Summary of Bill: Theft, possession of stolen property, malicious mischief, and theft of leased or rental property in the first degree occur if the crimes involve property valued at over \$2,500. Theft, possession of stolen property, malicious mischief, and theft of leased or rental property in the second degree occur if the crimes involve property valued at \$751 to \$2,500. Theft, possession of stolen property, malicious mischief, and theft of leased or rental property in the third degree occur if the crimes involve property valued at up to \$750.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: It has been thirty years since these numbers were adjusted, so a change is long overdue. The increases are conservative, less than the Consumer Price Index for the same period. The increases are not the result of a strict mathematical computation, rather, they also reflect good public policy. The changes will move some cases from Superior Court to District Court, potentially decreasing court costs while preserving the proper administration of justice.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Adam Kline, prime sponsor; Tom McBride, Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys; Ramona Brandes , Washington Defender's Association and Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.