

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5077

As Passed Senate, February 8, 2013

Title: An act relating to technical corrections to gender-based terms.

Brief Description: Making technical corrections to certain gender-based terms.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Holmquist Newbry and Keiser; by request of Statute Law Committee).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 1/28/13, 1/30/13 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/08/13, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5077 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Holmquist Newbry, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair; Conway, Ranking Member; Hasegawa, Hewitt, Keiser and King.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: Since 1983 state law has required that all statutes be written in gender-neutral terms, unless a specification of gender is intended. In 2007 the Legislature passed ESB 5063, an act relating to removing gender references. The act changed gender-specific terms to gender-neutral terms in several chapters of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), including those chapters dealing with firefighters, police officers, bondspersons, and material suppliers. The Legislature directed the Code Reviser, in consultation with the Statute Law Committee, to develop and implement a plan to correct gender-specific references in the entire RCW. The Code Reviser must make annual legislative recommendations to make the RCW completely gender-neutral by June 30, 2015.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Gender-specific terms and references are made gender-neutral in several RCW Titles. For example, references to his are changed to his or her and clergyman is changed to member of the clergy. Titles relating to public service are included and made gender-neutral throughout. Other code sections are included, such as sections that contain public health and safety regulations, to modify specific references to man or men.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: The Legislature directed the Code Reviser's Office in 1983 to draft with gender neutral terms. For the last 30 years, the office has been using gender-neutral terms. In 2007, a bill was presented that changed some occupation names and at that time the Code Reviser's Office was directed to go through the entire code and make gender neutral changes throughout. What we are finding now is older parts of the code that have not been amended in the last 30 years still have gender references. We are almost through the entire code.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; Kyle Thiessen, Secretary of the Statute Law Committee.