

**HB 173: Aggravated Assault and Battery Penalties
2008 Budget Session**

Sponsor: Rep. Steve Harshman (R-H37, Casper); co-sponsors Rep. Keith Gingery (R-H23, Jackson) and Sen. Tony Ross (R-S4, Cheyenne)

HB 173 would add a mandatory minimum prison sentence for certain felony convictions for aggravated assault and battery. Under current Wyoming law, conviction of aggravated assault and battery is a felony punishable by imprisonment up to 10 years.

HB 173 would increase the penalty for a person who was convicted of aggravated assault and battery with extreme indifference to the value of human life. This particular subset of felony assault and battery conviction would trigger punishment of at least 10 years in prison but not more than 20 years.

Supporters of HB 173 believed that the most serious cases of assault and battery, where the perpetrator shows complete disregard for another's life, should receive stronger punishment than other, less egregious manifestations of the same type of crime.

Opponents argued against mandatory minimum sentences on the grounds that they remove discretion and case-by-case judgment of the courts.

The House passed HB 173 unanimously, but the bill died when it was not considered by the full Senate before the deadline for floor action.