



**SEATTLE CITY
ATTORNEY'S
OFFICE
ANN DAVISON**

Illegal Graffiti Restitution Legislation CB 120995

June 2025

1. Illegal graffiti is a major problem in Seattle that costs the City, State, and property owners millions of dollars per year.
2. Current criminal enforcement efforts are resource-intensive and provide insufficient deterrence.
3. Many illegal graffiti taggers are known to police and promote themselves on social media but it can be difficult to hold them accountable through the criminal justice system.
4. The Illegal Graffiti Restitution legislation would provide the City Attorney with new authority to bring civil actions against the most prolific illegal graffiti taggers in circumstances where criminal charges might not be possible.




1. Illegal Graffiti a Major Problem

Slide 3



28,816

2024 saw **28,816** reported instances of graffiti vandalism



35

Only **35** were referred for misd. prosecution (~0.1%)



\$6 Million

The City spends approximately **\$6 million** annually on cleaning up graffiti



Property owners spend \$ millions more in graffiti abatement

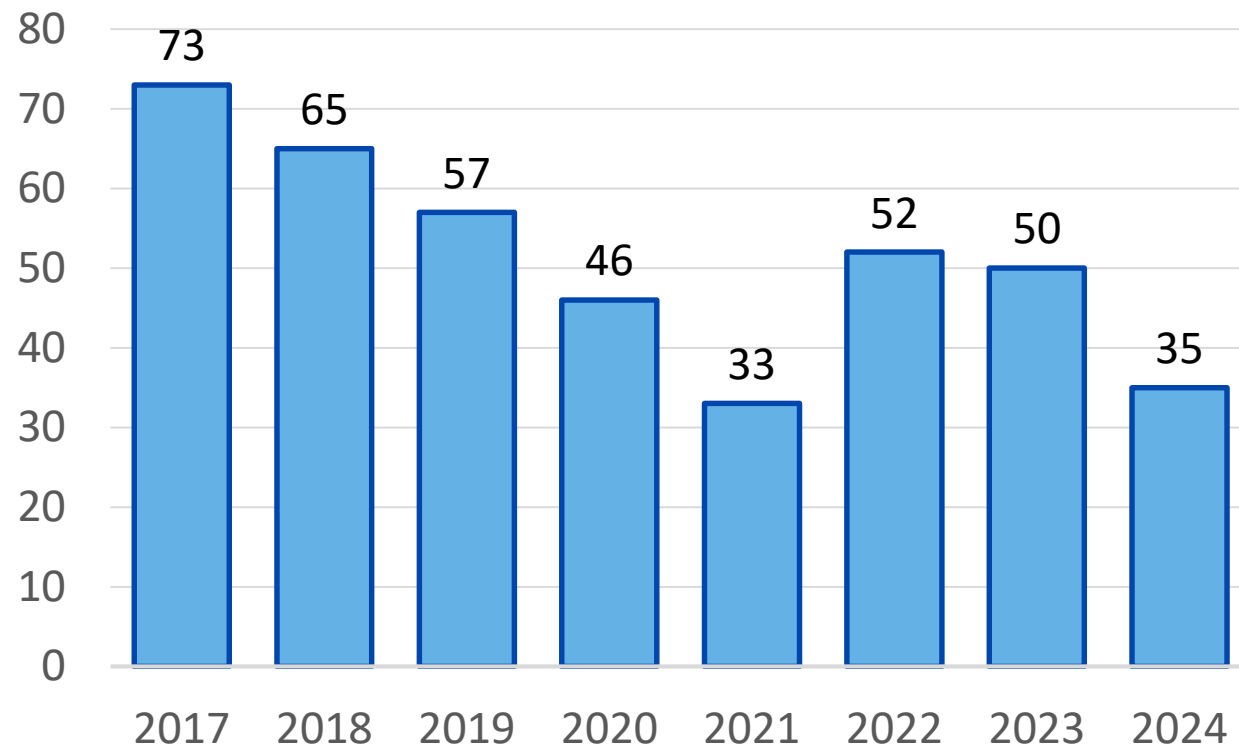


2. Current Enforcement Insufficient

Slide 4

The number of referrals for graffiti prosecution has been dropping despite significant volume of graffiti

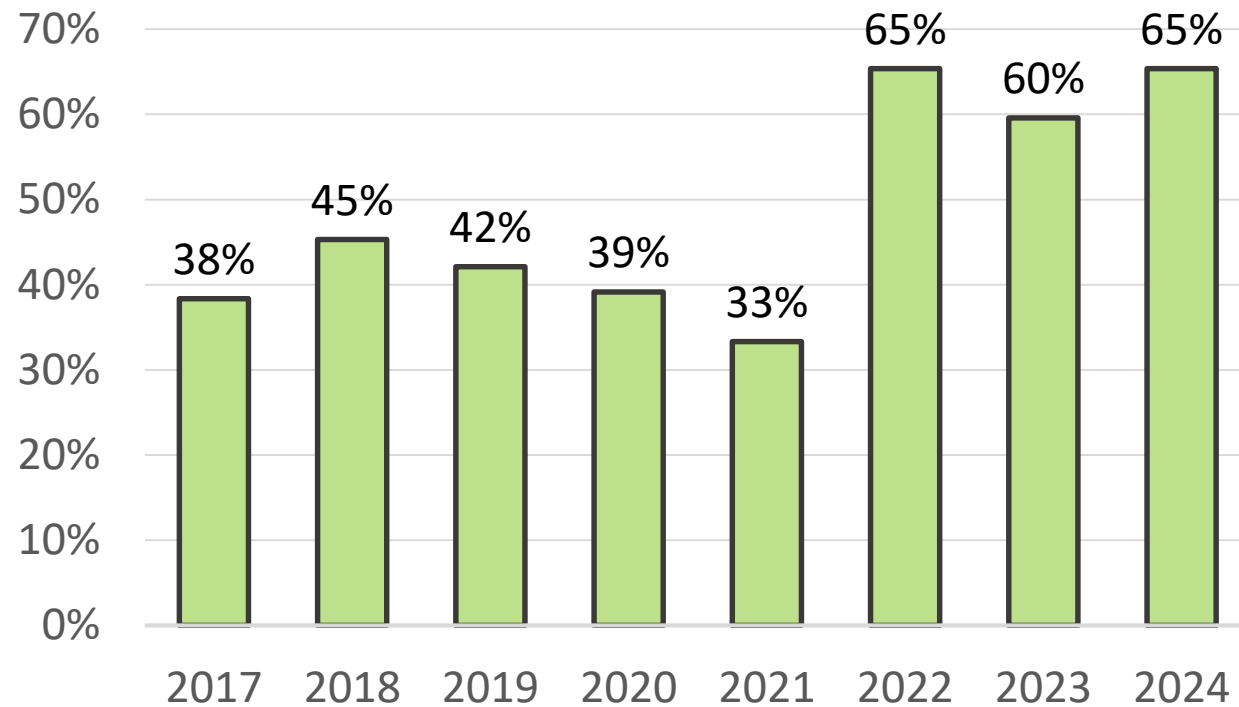
Graffiti Referrals



Graffiti charge rates have nearly doubled but the total number of cases remains low

Graffiti Charge Rates

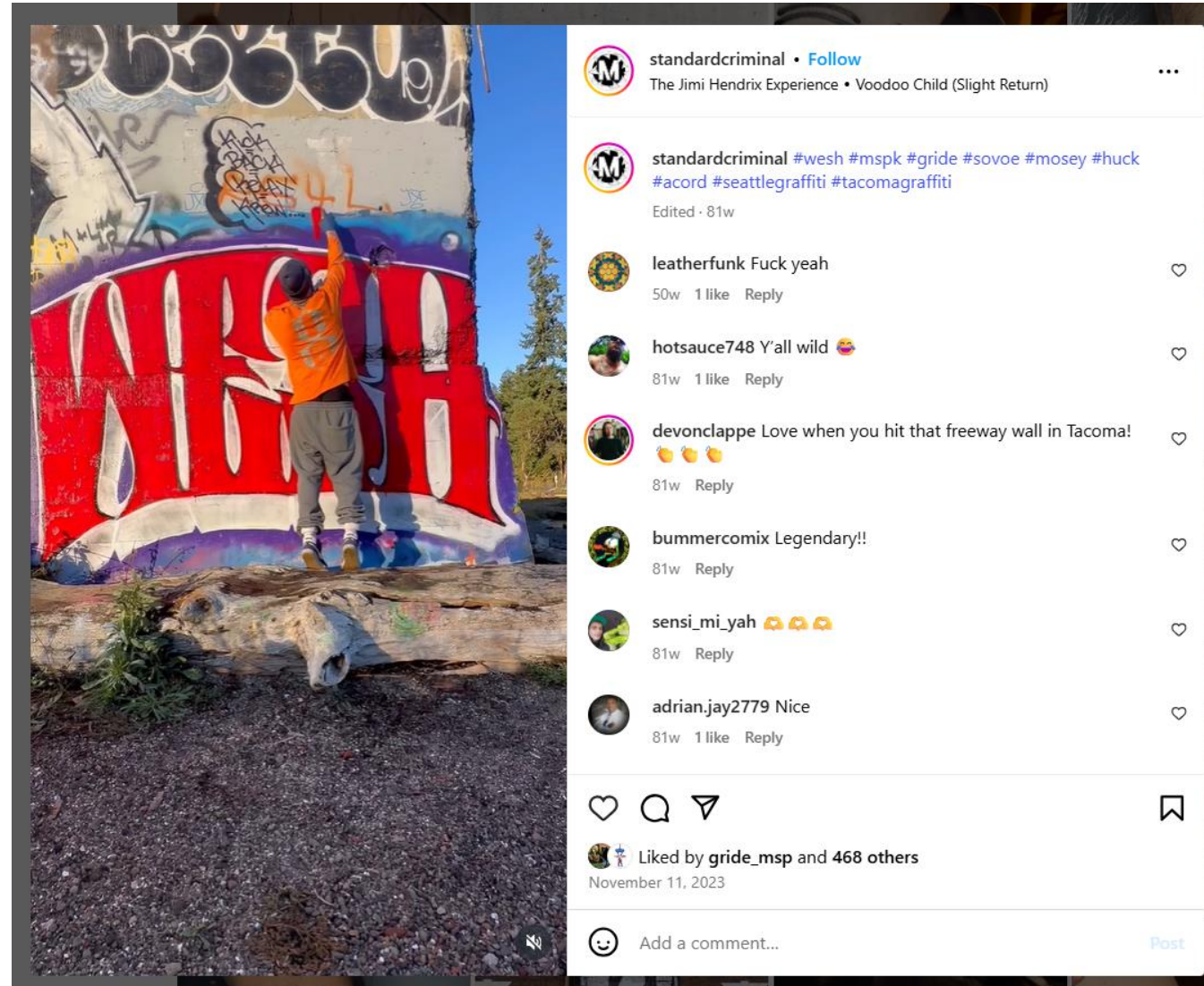
(by year report was received)



3. Graffiti Tagger's Self-Promotion

Slide 5

- Many illegal graffiti taggers who are known to the City post their work on Instagram and other social media sites.
- For example, the prolific graffiti tagger *WESH* is an individual named Kyle McClaughlin, who uses the Instagram handle @standardcriminal.
- *WESH* is responsible for dozens of significant illegal graffiti tags on WSDOT, Sound Transit, City, and private property over the past several years. Many of these incidents are posted to social media but only a small percentage of them have been criminally charged.

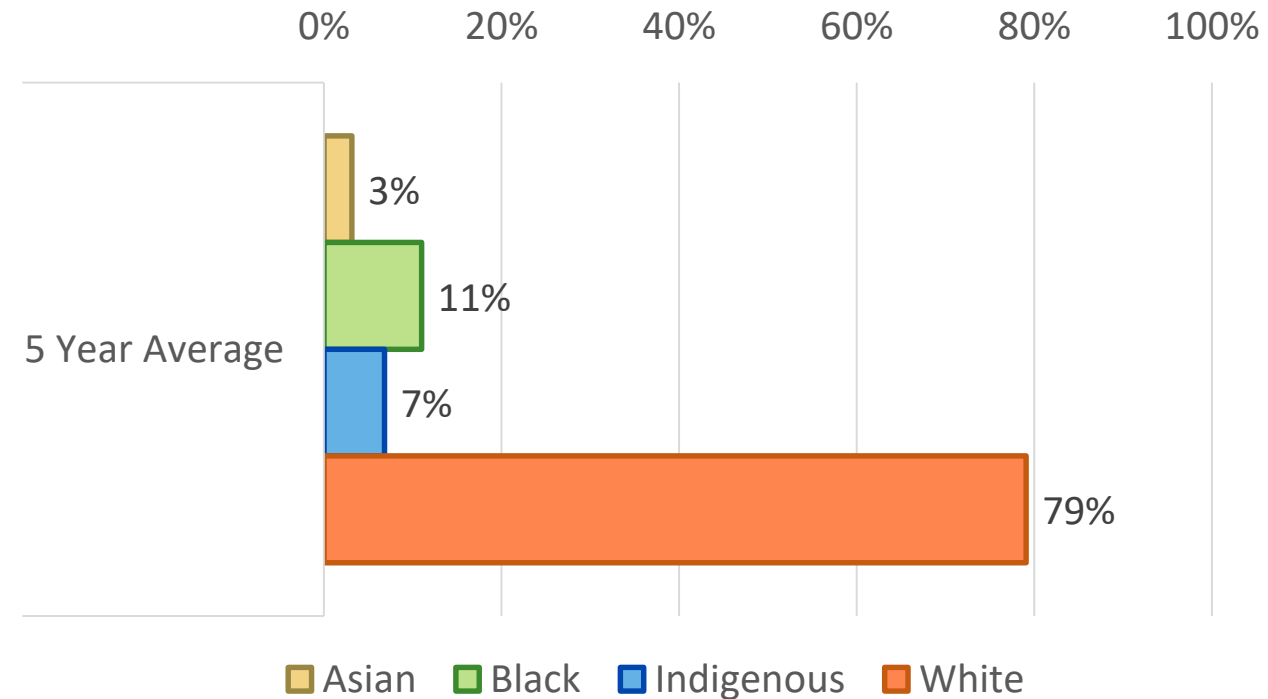
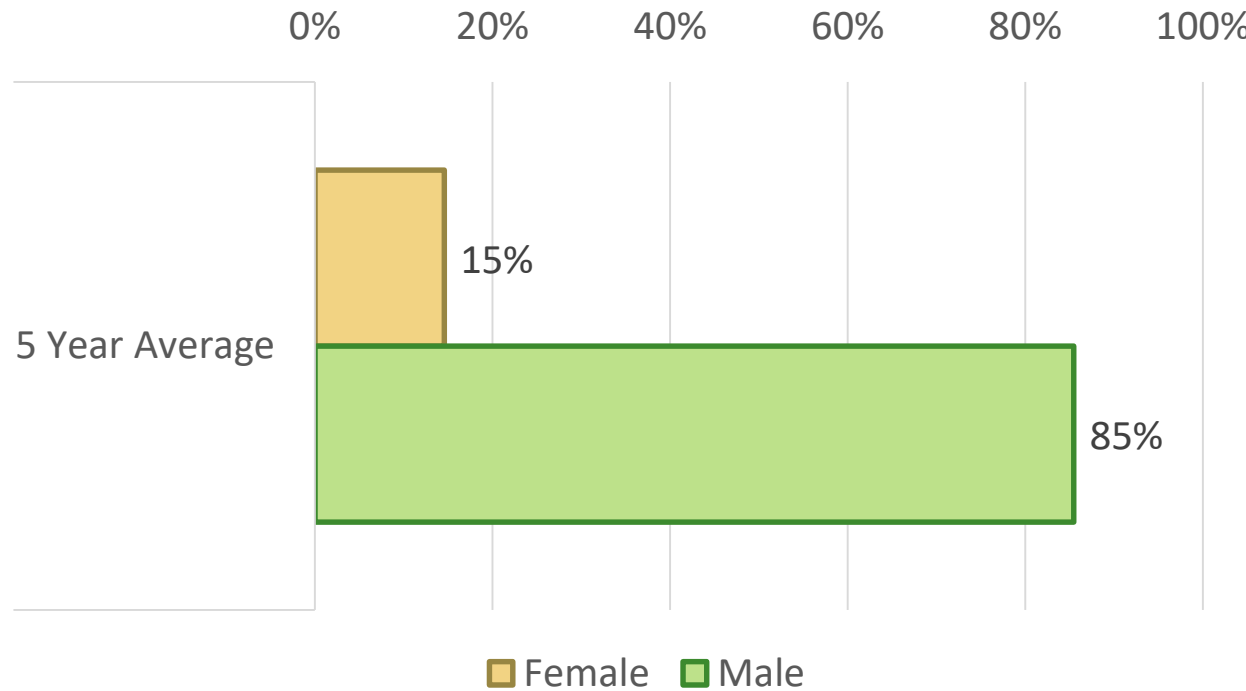


- Authorizes the City Attorney to bring a civil action against illegal graffiti taggers in Seattle Municipal Court
- \$1,000 fine per illegal graffiti violation plus restitution (City labor and material costs to abate the damage)
- Allows monetary damages and restitution to be converted to community service doing graffiti abatement work
- Standard of proof in civil cases is a 'preponderance of the evidence' -- does the evidence prove it is more likely than not that the defendant committed the violations
- City Attorney's Office would prioritize bringing actions against the most prolific illegal graffiti taggers and crews – individuals responsible for tens of thousands of dollars in property destruction



85% Male

79% White



Graffiti Referrals to the City Attorney's Office



An aerial photograph of the Seattle skyline at sunset. The city's buildings are silhouetted against a warm, orange and yellow sky. The water of the harbor is visible on the right, with a few ships and cranes. The overall mood is serene and professional.

Questions?



Seattle City Attorney's Office Ann Davison, City Attorney

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