

SUMMARY STATEMENT

State v. Hoover

Docket No. 51530-2024

The Idaho Supreme Court reversed the district court's decision dismissing Part II of the Information against Hoover, which asserted that a sentencing enhancement applied following a jury's finding in another case that Hoover was guilty of domestic battery with traumatic injury.

Hoover was arrested for misdemeanor domestic battery in October 2021. In April 2022, the State amended its complaint against Hoover to add a Part II, which asserted that Hoover was subject to a sentencing enhancement pursuant to Idaho Code section 18-918(5). If the jury found that Hoover committed the alleged battery and met the requirements for the enhancement, he would be convicted of a felony instead of a misdemeanor. The State alleged that Hoover was subject to the enhancement because following Hoover's arrest in October 2021, a jury in another case found him guilty of domestic battery with traumatic injury in March 2022. The magistrate court granted the State's motion to amend, and the case was transferred to the district court. The State filed an Information with the district court in May 2022, which alleged misdemeanor domestic battery in Part I and the felony sentencing enhancement in Part II.

Hoover moved to dismiss the Part II sentencing enhancement, arguing that he could not be liable under the enhancement because the incident that resulted in his conviction for domestic battery with traumatic injury occurred after the incident that resulted in his charges for misdemeanor domestic battery. The district court agreed and dismissed the Part II of the Information. The district court noted that the conduct in the case before it occurred five months prior to the conduct that gave rise to Hoover's felony conviction for domestic battery with traumatic injury. Because of that, the district court determined the felony conviction could not enhance the misdemeanor battery charge.

The State appealed, arguing that Idaho Code section 18-918(5) only requires a prior felony conviction within fifteen years of the subsequent conviction. The State contended that because the felony conviction occurred prior to the date Hoover was convicted on the current charge, the district court erred by interpreting the felony enhancement provision to require that *the criminal conduct* occur prior to the date of the subsequent finding of guilt or guilty plea. The State argued that, so long as *the finding of guilt or guilty plea* occurred prior to the date of the subsequent finding of guilty or guilty plea, the requirements for the enhancement were met.

The Idaho Supreme Court determined that Idaho Code section 18-918(5) was unambiguous and did not require that the criminal conduct occur prior to the finding of guilt or guilty plea, but instead that the prior finding of guilt or guilty plea occur prior to the finding or plea in the subsequent case. As such, the Idaho Supreme Court reversed the district court's decision dismissing the Part II sentencing enhancement and remanded the case for further proceedings.

This summary constitutes no part of the opinion of the Court, but has been prepared by court staff for the convenience of the public.