

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5375

As of January 30, 2007

Title: An act relating to clarifying and prescribing penalties for gambling under the age of eighteen.

Brief Description: Prohibiting minors from participating in gambling activities.

Sponsors: Senators Murray, Clements, Prentice, Kohl-Welles, Roach and Shin; by request of Gambling Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 1/29/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: Minors may not bet on activities regulated by the Gambling Commission, except that, by rule: a person under the age of 18 may sell raffle tickets and may play bingo at agricultural fairs and school carnivals or when accompanied by an adult member of his or her immediate family or guardian; and school-aged minors (between age 6 and 18) may play commercial amusement games at certain locations during specified times.

The gambling establishment and those persons operating gambling activities are responsible for assuring that persons under the age of 18 are not playing in or participating in the operation of any gambling activity. The Commission may fine a licensee, operator, or dealer who allows a minor to participate in a gambling activity. Minors who illegally participate or attempt to participate in gambling activities are not penalized.

Summary of Bill: Persons under the age of 18 may play bingo and amusement games, but may not participate in other gambling activities. A minor who engages in prohibited gambling activities commits a class 2 civil infraction and is subject to a fine, community restitution, and court costs.

The bill authorizes in-house controlled purchase programs for employee training and employer self-compliance checks.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Gambling Commission has been working with the Liquor Control Board to conduct underage compliance inspections. For these inspections, the Commission has determined that the minor is able to gamble about 40 percent of the time. There are penalties for operators and dealers who allow underage people to gamble, but there are no penalties for the minor who gambles. The bill provides for a class 2 civil infraction and a \$125 fine because a lesser penalty with a smaller fine would not be as effective of a deterrent.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Amy Hunter, Washington State Gambling Commission.