

Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 1027

Brief Description: *Establishing the live horse racing compact.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Cairns, Cody, Kenney, D. Schmidt and Dunn.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Authorizes the Washington Horse Racing Commission to participate in a multi-state committee that will create and issue a national license to participants in parimutuel horse racing.*

Hearing Date: *1/23/01*

Staff: *Sydney Forrester (786-7120).*

Background:

The Washington Horse Racing Commission regulates parimutuel horse racing in Washington. The commission is composed of five commissioners and four ex-officio members.

The commission licenses horse racing associations and individuals. Licensing of individuals includes licensing of all persons who participate in racing at Washington tracks, including owners, jockeys, trainers, groomers, exercise riders, and veterinarians.

Horse racing participants frequently travel from state-to-state to participate in various races and must apply for separate licensure in each state in which they participate. In 2000, the commission licensed approximately 4,000 individuals, of whom approximately 25 percent were out-of-state participants. Approximately 30 percent of licensed Washington-based owners and trainers race their horses in other states also.

In 1998, the Virginia Racing Commission, in consultation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, initiated the effort to create a live horse racing interstate compact to develop a national licensing system. Five states (Delaware, Louisiana, Florida, Virginia, and West Virginia) have signed the compact.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington Horse Racing Commission is authorized to participate in a compact committee that will create and issue a national license to participants in live horse racing. One official from the commission will be appointed by the Governor to serve a four-year term on the compact committee. The expenses of the designated official must be paid by the state. Participating states are not liable for the committee's financial obligations.

The compact committee will have the power to:

- 1) determine the categories of participants to be licensed;*
- 2) establish the licensure and renewal requirements for each category;*
- 3) set license terms;*
- 4) charge application and renewal fees;*
- 5) investigate applicants and receive criminal history information necessary to determine if a license should be issued;*
- 6) issue and renew licenses;*
- 7) manage the business of the compact committee, including adopting bylaws, selecting officers, hiring employees, and entering into contracts; and*
- 8) receive funds through grants, appropriations, and gifts.*

The effect of a criminal history on the issuance or renewal of a license will be based on standards equal to the most stringent standards applied by any member state. The committee does not have the power to deny a license. If the committee determines an applicant is not eligible for a national license, the committee must notify the applicant that the committee can not process the application further. The applicant may submit additional evidence to the committee, and the applicant also may apply to be licensed in the individual states. Participating states may not penalize applicants based solely on a decision of the committee.

By enacting the compact, Washington agrees to accept the decisions of the committee in issuing licenses. Washington reserves the right to charge a fee for the use of a national license at Washington tracks, and the right to apply Washington standards in determining whether a national license should be revoked or suspended.

Washington may withdraw from the compact by enacting a statute repealing the compact.

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

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.