

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5429

As of Third Reading, February 15, 2002

Title: An act relating to authorizing bona fide charitable and nonprofit organizations to conduct bingo.

Brief Description: Authorizing bona fide charitable and nonprofit organizations to conduct bingo.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions (originally sponsored by Senators Prentice and West).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 2/12/01; 5/9/01; 2/7/02 [DPS, DNP].

Failed Senate: 2/15/02, 26-19.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5429 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Benton, Gardner, Honeyford, Rasmussen, Regala, West and Winsley.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley and Hochstatter.

Staff: Dave Cheal (786-7576)

Background: The Legislature has declared fund-raising by bona fide charitable and nonprofit organizations to be in the public interest. In addition to specific fund-raising events, charitable and nonprofit organizations may conduct bingo games up to three times per week. Bingo games are those in which prizes are awarded on the basis of matching numbers or symbols on a card to numbers or symbols selected at random. Bingo cards may be sold only at the time and place where the game is conducted.

In 1999, bona fide charitable and nonprofit organizations began offering satellite bingo. This game allows bingo halls to join together once or twice daily (during operating hours) to offer a large guaranteed prize to one winner within this state.

Summary of Bill: Provisions of the current law are deleted that limit charitable and nonprofit organizations from conducting bingo or using their premises to conduct bingo more than three days per week. Charitable and nonprofit organizations licensed to conduct bingo may share bingo facilities. The Gambling Commission may not issue any licenses to conduct bingo until July 1, 2007.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested for substitute bill on May 3, 2001.

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

Testimony For: Revenue from gambling activities conducted by charities is on the decline with the emergence of increased competition from minicasinos and tribal casinos. The attraction that electronic bingo could provide and the removal of the three-day limit would allow the charitable organizations to keep pace.

Testimony Against: This is another round of expansion of gambling that will lead to other requests for expansion. We can't depend on gambling as the primary way to fund charitable activities.

Testified: Ed Fleisher, Gambling Commission (pro); Joe Beck, WA Indian Gaming Assn. (con w/concerns); Don Shaffer, Paul Frink, Boys & Girls (pro); Dawn Vyvyan, Yakama Nation, Swinomish Casino/Tribe; Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe (con); Dianna Verdino, Rodeo Bingo-Silver Buckle Rodeo Club (pro); Ric Newgard (pro); Greg Murray, MusicWorks Northwest (pro); Ron Rosenbloom, AWC (concerns); Linnea Welton, Seattle Skating Club (pro); Don Kaufman, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Spokane (pro); Matthew Chaney, John Patrick Chaney, Katy Walker, Katya Sodamin, SJHA (pro); Rick Ellison, Darcy Walker, Seattle Jr. Hockey (pro).