

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6520

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As of January 30, 2002

**Title:** An act relating to pathological gambling.

**Brief Description:** Treating pathological gambling problems.

**Sponsors:** Senators Prentice and Carlson.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 1/31/02.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

**Staff:** David Cheal (786-7576)

**Background:** Pathological gambling is a serious problem in our state. It often has the effect of devastating the life of the pathological gambler and those close to them.

A 1999 study makes an estimate of 20,750 pathological gamblers in this state at that time.

According to the Washington State Council on Problem Gambling, there is a shortage of treatment availability in Washington. Some treatment is available for those who can afford it in the Puget Sound region. Spokane County residents can obtain treatment at Deaconess Medical Center at no cost. There is a lack of trained treatment providers in most of the state. Individuals without money or insurance cannot obtain treatment.

**Summary of Bill:** A treatment program for pathological gambling is established within the Department of Social and Health Services. To receive treatment through that program, a person must be in need of treatment but unable to afford it, and be targeted by the department to be most amenable to treatment.

One million dollars is appropriated from the general fund to the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse in the Department of Social and Health Services for treatment of pathological gambling for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2003, and an additional \$1 million for the following fiscal year.

Five hundred thousand dollars is appropriated to the Gambling Commission for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003, for use in problem gambling prevention, youth education, public awareness, training, and helpline services. An additional \$500,000 is appropriated for the following fiscal year.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 30, 2002.

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