

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5612

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Commerce & Trade, February 21, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to the treatment of pathological gambling.

**Brief Description:** Requiring revenue transfers for the treatment of pathological gambling.

**Sponsors:** Senators Honeyford, Prentice, Oke, Regala, Schmidt, Franklin, Winsley and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Commerce & Trade: 2/14/03, 2/21/03 [DPS-WM].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & TRADE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5612 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Honeyford, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Franklin and Keiser.

**Staff:** John Dziedzic (786-7784)

**Background:** In 2002, the Legislature authorized the Lottery Commission to participate with other states in a "shared game lottery" known as "the Big Game." In granting this authority, the Legislature also established a program in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for the treatment of pathological gambling, and directed that, "for fiscal year 2003," a transfer of \$500,000 from the revenues derived from "the Big Game" was to be made to the program.

To receive treatment under the program, a person must need treatment for pathological gambling, be "most amenable to treatment," and be unable to afford it.

As required by the legislation creating the program, DSHS reported to the Legislature in September 2002, with an implementation plan. The report cites a study conducted in 1999, estimating that between 53,200 and 137,900 residents in Washington could be classified as either problem or pathological gamblers. DSHS must report by November 2003, regarding program participation and client outcomes.

The American Psychiatric Association describes the essential features of "pathological gambling" as (a) continuous or periodic loss of control over gambling; (b) progression in frequency of gambling and amounts wagered, and a preoccupation with gambling and finding ways to obtain money with which to gamble; and (c) continuation of gambling despite adverse consequences.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** Transfers from revenues derived from the shared game lottery for the treatment of pathological gambling are made annually, beginning with fiscal year

2004. The amount of transfer is set at \$250,000 per year. This transfer must occur before any other transfers that may be required from these revenues.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Language authorizing transfers to continue beyond fiscal year 2003, and clarifying the frequency, amount, and priority is added.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** The pathological gambling treatment program funded by the transfer authorized under this statute for fiscal year 2003 is up and running. It is important to continue funding to assure that clients continue to receive treatment.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Gary Hanson, WA State Council on Problem Gambling; Donna Whitmire; Steve Griffiths, Delores Chiechi, Recreational Gaming Association.