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**Commerce & Labor Committee**

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**HB 2872**

**Brief Description:** Increasing the minimum age for gambling.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Roberts, Roach, O'Brien, Dickerson, Nixon, Cody, Green, Hudgins, Appleton, Darneille, McDonald, Rodne and McCune.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Changes the minimum age for engaging in gambling wagering or state lottery activities from age 18 to age 21.

**Hearing Date:** 1/25/06

**Staff:** Chris Cordes (786-7103).

**Background:**

Gambling Activities. Under the Washington Gambling Act (Act), the Washington State Gambling Commission (WSGC) regulates wagering on activities such as social card games, bingo, raffles, amusement games, punch boards, pull-tabs, and sports pools. Other activities, such as golfing sweepstakes or turkey shoots, are not "gambling" required to obtain licenses from the GC as long as they are conducted in the specified manner. Some activities, such as fishing derbies, are exempt from the Act.

One statute allows wagering on the flip of a coin or roll of the dice to determine who will pay for food, beverages, or coin-operated music in establishments selling for or beverages for consumption on the premises. This statute specifies that minors are barred from engaging in the wagering activities allowed by the Act.

Under WSGC rules, persons under age 18 are not permitted to wager in or participate in the operation of a gambling activity except for:

- playing licensed bingo games if accompanied by an adult member of the minor's immediate family;
- playing bingo at agricultural fairs or school carnivals;
- playing amusement games regulated by the WSGC; and
- selling raffle tickets for certain nonprofit organizations whose primary purpose is the development of youth.

Gambling licensees and operators are responsible for assuring that persons under age 18 are not playing in or participating in the operation of gambling activities.

State Lottery Tickets. The law governing the Washington State Lottery specifies that state lottery tickets may not be sold to persons under age 18. It is a misdemeanor for a person under 18 to directly buy a state lottery ticket.

Horse Racing Wagering. The law regulating horse racing is administered by the Washington State Horse Racing Commission (WSHRC). This law does not specify a minimum age for wagering on horse races, except for advance deposit wagering which requires the account holder to be at least age 21. The WSHRC rules, however, prohibit the purchase or cashing of a parimutuel ticket by anyone under age 18. Employees of the racing association are prohibited from knowingly selling a ticket to or cashing a ticket for someone under age 18, and persons under age 18 are not permitted in the wagering areas.

**Summary of Bill:**

Various statutory references to a minimum age of 18 for engaging in wagering or state lottery activities are changed to a minimum age of 21.

Gambling Activities. Persons under 21 are prohibited from wagering on activities allowed under the Washington Gambling Act. It is unlawful for anyone to assist, participate with, or knowingly allow an underage person to engage in wagering allowed under that law.

State Lottery Tickets. State lottery tickets may not be sold to anyone under age 21.

Horse Racing Wagering. Persons under 21 are prohibited from engaging in the wagering activities allowed on horse races. It is unlawful for anyone to assist, participate with, or knowingly allow an underage person to engage in wagering allowed under the horse racing law.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 17, 2006.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.