
Commerce & Labor Committee

SSB 5953

Brief Description: Authorizing class 1 racing associations to conduct handicapping contests.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research & Development (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Deccio, Keiser, Rasmussen and Kohl-Welles).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Exempts from the law regulating horse race meets and from Washington Gambling Commission rules, Washington Horse Racing Commission-authorized handicap contests involving the outcome of multiple horse races, and allows the handicap contests to be conducted by a licensed class 1 racing association for patrons at a live-race meet.

Hearing Date: 3/28/05

Staff: Rebekah Ward (786-7106).

Background:

The Legislature established the Washington Horse Racing Commission (Commission) in 1933 to license, regulate and supervise all race meets and parimutuel betting. It is unlawful for any person to hold any race meet without having first obtained and having in force and effect a license issued by the Commission.

A class 1 racing association is defined as a licensee approved by the Commission to conduct during each twelve-month period at least forty days of live racing. After Commission approval, a class 1 racing association may conduct parimutuel wagering at a satellite location or locations within the state of Washington. Thereafter, the class 1 racing association license must have conducted at least one full live racing season, and must hold a live race meet within each succeeding twelve-month period to maintain eligibility to continue to participate in parimutuel wagering at a satellite location or locations. Emerald Downs is currently the only class 1 racing association in Washington.

Parimutuel handicapping contests involve participants paying a fee, and predicting the outcome of one or more pre-established combinations of outcomes of more than one horse race. The participant whose predictions are determined to be the closest to the actual results wins the aggregated total of fees paid, less the cost of administering the contest. Fees paid to enter the a handicapping contest are kept separate from and do not affect the parimutuel wagering pool.

Summary of Bill:

Handicapping contests involving the outcome of multiple horse races which are authorized by the Washington Horse Racing Commission are exempt from the Gambling Commission rules. The handicap contests are allowed to be conducted by a licensed class 1 racing association for patrons at live-race meets.

Rules Authority: The bill addresses the rule making powers of the Washington Horse Racing Commission.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.