

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSCR 8417

As Passed Senate, February 20, 2006

Brief Description: Establishing a committee on gambling policy setting.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research & Development (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Parlette, Kline and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 1/26/06, 1/30/06 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/20/06, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 8417 be substituted therefor, and the substitute concurrent resolution do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Parlette, Ranking Minority Member; Honeyford and Keiser.

Staff: John Dziedzic (786-7784)

Background: Legalized gambling in Washington has grown over the last generation. In the early 1970s, approximately \$78 million was wagered annually on parimutuel betting on horse racing, the only legalized form of gambling at that time. The Gambling Commission estimates that gambling enterprises in Washington had net receipts of nearly \$1.7 billion in 2005, and the types of legal gambling that are available now in Washington, and in neighboring states and provinces, now represent a wide array of gambling choices. Concerns have been raised regarding the social and economic implications of gambling, how the state has developed current gambling policy and how those policy choices should be made in the future.

Summary of Bill: A joint select committee is established to review the history, and make recommendations regarding the future of Washington gambling policy-setting. There are eight voting members: four Senators and four Representatives serving, respectively, on the Senate, Labor Commerce, Research & Development Committee, and the House Commerce & Labor Committee, with equal representation of each caucus of each chamber. A county prosecuting attorney; and representatives of cities with and without mini-casinos (jointly appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House); plus the Governor, or her designee; and appointed representatives of the Horse Racing, Gambling and State Lottery commissions and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) problem gambling treatment program serve as non-voting members of the committee. Support for the committee is to be provided by legislative staff and staff of the non-voting state agencies.

In conducting its review of gambling policy and in developing recommendations, the committee is directed to involve participation from throughout Washington by representatives

of all recognized or acknowledged tribes in the state, the commercial cardroom industry; lottery vendors; the charitable gaming industry and those entities that benefit from such activities; problem and pathological gambling treatment providers, and others active in the support of persons with problem or pathological gambling conditions; and members of the public.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

Testimony For: The issues surrounding gambling in Washington have grown increasingly more complex and involved. It is a good idea to step back and look at these issues because it has been several years since there was a broad-based, comprehensive examination of what this state's policies should be, and how they are made and implemented. It will be important for the committee to make sure all interested groups are encouraged to participate.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Norm Maleng, King County Prosecutor; Dolores Chiechi, Recreational Gaming Association.