

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1345

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce, Research & Development, February 25, 2008

Title: An act relating to clarifying and prescribing penalties for gambling under the age of eighteen.

Brief Description: Prohibiting minors from participating in gambling activities.

Sponsors: Representatives Wood, Condotta, Kristiansen, Lantz, Dickerson, Morrell, McCune and Conway; by request of Gambling Commission.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/05/07, 94-1; 1/23/08, 96-1.

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 3/26/07, 3/27/07 [DPA]; 2/25/08 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Franklin, Hewitt, King, Murray and Prentice.

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: Minors may not bet on activities regulated by the Gambling Commission (Commission), except that, by rule a person under the age of 18 may sell raffle tickets and may play bingo at agricultural fairs and school carnivals or when accompanied by an adult member of that person's immediate family or guardian; and school-aged minors (between age 6 and 18) may play commercial amusement games at certain locations during specified times.

The gambling establishment and those persons operating gambling activities are responsible for assuring that persons under the age of 18 are not playing in or participating in the operation of any gambling activity. The Commission may fine a licensee, operator, or dealer who allows a minor to participate in a gambling activity. Minors who illegally participate or attempt to participate in gambling activities are not penalized.

Summary of Bill: Persons under the age of 18 may play bingo and amusement games, but may not participate in other gambling activities. A minor who engages in prohibited gambling activities commits a class 2 civil infraction and is subject to a fine, community restitution, and court costs.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In-house controlled purchase programs for employee training and employer self-compliance checks are authorized.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This was the bill heard by this committee last year and comes at the request of the Gambling Commission. Currently, people under 18 cannot gamble in card rooms but there are no penalties in code to discourage youths from gambling. This is a reminder to the younger people that they can enjoy gaming when they are older. The Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys support the bill. This came from a complaint of minors playing cards at a card room near a high school. While the complaint was unfounded, the Commission did start joint inspections with the Liquor Control Board. It was discovered that there are penalties to be imposed on the violating card rooms, but not on the minor. The Recreational Gaming Association supports the bill, including the provisions for in-house controlled purchase programs.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Wood, prime sponsor; Amy Hunter, Washington State Gambling Commission; Dolores Chiechi, Recreational Gaming Association.