

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5615

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
State Government & Elections, January 14, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to designating pickleball as the official state sport.

**Brief Description:** Designating pickleball as the official state sport.

**Sponsors:** Senators Lovick, Hunt, Hasegawa, Honeyford, Lovelett, Pedersen, Randall, Rolfes and Wellman.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State Government & Elections: 1/12/22, 1/14/22 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Designates pickleball as the official state sport.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Hasegawa and Hawkins.

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

**Background:** On a Saturday afternoon in the summer of 1965, Congressman (and future Lieutenant Governor) Joel Pritchard, Bill Bell, and Barney McCallum devised a new game for their families at Pritchard's summer cabin on Bainbridge Island. Combining elements of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong, pickleball is played with a paddle and a plastic ball similar to a wiffle ball. Pritchard, Bell, and McCallum intended for the game to be enjoyed by persons of all ages and skill levels. Pickleball can be played as singles or doubles.

Today, the national governing body for pickleball, USA Pickleball, has approximately

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40,000 registered members and estimates that over 4 million people play pickleball at nearly 8500 locations nationally, while the International Federation of Pickleball counts 67 member countries.

**Summary of Bill:** Pickleball is designated as the official state sport.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Sometimes we need to do things that are just fun. Washington will some day be known as the birthplace of Boeing, Starbucks, Microsoft, and pickleball. People will come to visit Bainbridge Island to learn about the history of pickleball. Across the world, people are welcoming, encouraging, and hold a reverence for Washington and its role in the history of pickleball. More than half the inductees in the Pickleball Hall of Fame have Washington roots.

Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the world, played by 4.2 million people in the United States and over 5 million people worldwide. We expect our sport to have more players than tennis within ten years. Over 10,000 players per month are taking up the sport. It's played on every continent, including Antarctica. Spokane is hosting the 2022 regional championship, expecting to generate \$500,000 of economic impact. Many tournaments are now broadcast on mainstream television.

Pickleball has social, health, and psychological benefits. It is the most inclusive, affordable, and multi-generational sport ever invented. There are rules for players in wheelchairs. Players with Parkinson's and dementia play pickleball as long as they are able to do so. Pickleball has been introduced to prison inmates, teaching them teamwork and discipline.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have heeded the call to go outside for recreation. Many new pickleball players find relief from the stress and boredom of the pandemic by looking for good weather to go outside and play.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator John Lovick, Prime Sponsor; Kate Van Gent, Self-Employed; Dennis Poppe, United States Senior Pickleball Association; Frank Chiappone, Seattle Metro Pickleball Association; Chuck Wright; Madeleine Fraley; Fran Myer, Seattle Metro Pickleball Association; Ralph Munro; Steven Thorndill; Jeremy Paget, Tickle Will Pickle Club.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.