
Regulated Substances & Gaming Committee

HB 1707

Brief Description: Concerning bingo conducted by bona fide charitable or nonprofit organizations.

Sponsors: Representatives Kloba, Reed and Eslick.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the definition of bingo in the Gambling Act to eliminate the requirement that a bingo game must be conducted only in the county within which the bona fide charitable or nonprofit organization is principally located.
- Modifies the definition of bingo in the Gambling Act to add a requirement that the bona fide charitable or nonprofit organization conducting bingo must be principally located in Washington and may not be approved for more than three licenses to conduct bingo activities.

Hearing Date: 2/6/23

Staff: Peter Clodfelter (786-7127).

Background:

Pursuant to the Gambling Act, the game of bingo may be conducted by bona fide charitable or nonprofit organizations and certain agricultural fairs. To be considered an eligible bona fide charitable or nonprofit organization, the organization must be organized for charitable, benevolent, eleemosynary, educational, civic, patriotic, political, religious, scientific, social, fraternal, athletic, or agricultural purposes only. In the opinion of the Washington State

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

Gambling Commission (WSGC), the organization must have been organized and be operated primarily for purposes other than the operation of gambling activities.

A bingo game conducted by a bona fide charitable or nonprofit organization must be conducted only in the county within which the organization is principally located. A bona fide charitable or nonprofit organization is deemed to be principally located in the county within which it has its primary business office. If the organization has no business office, the organization is deemed to be located in the county of principal residence of its chief executive officer. However, any organization conducting any licensed and established bingo game in any locale as of January 1, 1981, is exempt from the requirement that the game must be conducted in the county in which the organization is principally located.

Bona fide charitable or nonprofit entities may conduct bingo with or without a license. Restrictions for unlicensed bingo include that the activities may be conducted no more than twice each calendar year and over a period of no more than 12 consecutive days each time. Gross revenues from bingo may not exceed \$5,000 during any calendar year for unlicensed bingo.

The WSGC issues licenses to conduct bingo to bona fide charitable and nonprofit organizations, and these organizations holding a license to conduct bingo are not subject to the limits on how many days per calendar year bingo may be conducted or on the gross revenues that may be generated from bingo. However, activities are subject to the WSGC's regulations and local governments may tax bingo at a rate of up to 5 percent of the gross receipts less the amount awarded as cash or merchandize prizes. If bingo is conducted on more than three occasions per week, the organization conducting the game must include a mandatory statement cautioning against problem gambling and providing a specific problem gambling helpline number.

Summary of Bill:

The definition of bingo in the Gambling Act is amended to eliminate the requirement that a bingo game must be conducted only in the county within which the organization is principally located. Language is also removed regarding what county a bona fide charitable or nonprofit organization is deemed to be located in for purposes of conducting bingo, if it has no business office.

A requirement is added for conducting bingo that a bona fide charitable or nonprofit organization must be principally located in Washington and may not be approved for more than three licenses to conduct bingo activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 02/02/2023.

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