

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6430

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Trade, February 1, 1996

Title: An act relating to social card games.

Brief Description: Changing social card game provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Schow and Spanel.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 1/24/96, 2/1/96 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6430 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Fraser and Newhouse.

Staff: Traci Ratzliff (786-7452)

Background: Under current law, taverns, restaurants, and other businesses primarily engaged in selling food or drink may be licensed to conduct social card games. Nonprofit and charitable organizations are also allowed to conduct social card games.

Licensees may not operate more than five separate card tables at an establishment. House banked card games (such as blackjack) and player supported prize contests (such as jackpot poker) associated with card games are currently prohibited by state law.

Licensees are permitted to charge players an hourly sitting fee, currently set at a maximum of \$6 per hour, per player or a tournament entry fee not to exceed \$50. Licensees are prohibited from collecting any additional fee from the players.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A card room licensee may be allowed by the Gambling Commission to operate up to 15 separate card tables at an establishment. In addition, licensees are authorized to act as custodian of player supported prize contests associated with card games.

Licensees are authorized to collect a fee, including a percentage of a winner's prize, from card players.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Gambling Commission is responsible for establishing the number of tables that can be operated at a card room establishment; the provision allowing house-banked card games is deleted; card room operators are authorized to collect a percentage of a winner's pot, or other fees from card players.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 1996.

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

Testimony For: We just want the same standards for operating card games as are enjoyed by the tribes. This will level the playing field and help non-tribal gaming operators to compete with the tribal casinos.

Testimony Against: We believe local government should be given the discretion to decide the number of card tables that are operated in an establishment. The public should have the ability to provide input on this decision since these establishments are located in their neighborhoods.

Testified: PRO: Senator Schow, prime sponsor; Steven Downen, Riverside Inn; George Teeney, card room operator; Dave Pardee, Skyway Bowl; Robert Saucier, Mars Hotel; Fred Steiner, Diamond Lil's; Art Lawerson, Cafe International; Lou Dales, Tower Inn; CON: Dick Dorsett, Pierce County; Maureen Morris, Association of Cities.