

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1317

As Passed House

March 18, 1997

Title: An act relating to amusement games.

Brief Description: Regulating amusement games.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Honeyford, Sheldon, Crouse and McMorris).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 2/5/97, 2/26/97 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/18/97, 92-6.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives McMorris, Chairman; Honeyford, Vice Chairman; Clements; Hatfield and Lisk.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Conway; Wood; Boldt and Cole.

Staff: Pam Madson (786-7166).

Background: Amusement games are games played for entertainment where the person actively participates and the outcome depends on the player's skill. Amusement games include dart games, ring games, games requiring hand/eye coordination, and mechanical crane games. Only merchandise may be awarded as prizes for these games.

Amusement game operators must be licensed by the Gambling Commission. Amusement games may be conducted only in connection with certain events or at certain locations.

For locations open to the public where school-aged children are allowed to play, the Gambling Commission, by rule, limits the value of a merchandise prize and the amount that may be charged a player to play. Prizes may cost the licensed operator

of the game no more than \$100 and he or she may charge a player no more than 50 cents.

Grocery stores qualify as an authorized amusement game location if the store area, excluding parking area, exceeds 12,000 square feet. Restaurants qualify if family entertainment activities are offered in addition to serving food.

Summary of Bill: Authorized locations for amusement games are expanded to include restaurants whether or not family entertainment events are offered. Department stores and grocery stores that exceed 10,000 square feet in store area, and combination department and grocery stores may also offer amusement games.

The prize allowance and price per chance are increased for those public locations where school-aged children are allowed to play. Prizes may cost the licensee no more than \$200 and the licensee may charge a player no more than \$1.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill allows a reasonable expansion of the location of amusement devices. This request is in response to the nature of the industry and the type of games that are being operated. The original prize limit was set at the upper end of prizes that were being offered when the games were first allowed. Operators need to provide more attractive prizes. Most equipment is priced currently at 25 cents per play. New machines are coming out that will require an increase to the price per play in order to operate the equipment.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (Pro) John Woodring, Washington Licenced Beverage Association; Dave Walker, Washington Amusement Operators Association; and O.K. Johnson. (Responding to questions) Carrie Tellefson, Washington State Gambling Commission