

# HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

## HB 1405

**Brief Description:** Authorizing joint bingo games.

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**Sponsors:** Representatives McMorris, Robertson, Wood, Conway, Boldt and Delvin

Hearing: February 5, 1997

### **BACKGROUND:**

Bingo games are a type of gambling activity authorized by law and regulated by the Gambling Commission. Although it is an authorized gambling activity, it is closely controlled.

Bingo may be operated only by charitable and nonprofit organizations or by an agricultural fair. Organizations may offer bingo only three times per week at a location that may only offer bingo three times per week. Different organizations may not use the same location under this restriction.

Only members or employees of the organization may manage the game and may not manage games for any other organization unless authorized by the Commission.

The game may be conducted only in the county in which the organization is located. Proceeds from the game may only benefit the organization conducting the game. Cards for the game may be sold only at the time and place of the game.

The limitations placed on the operation of legal bingo games anticipates one organization operating a game where the organization is located, offering the game only three days per week, and the proceeds generated from the game go the operating organization.

During 1996, a task force of industry members formed by the Commission conducted a study of the issues facing charitable fund raising activity in light of declining net proceeds for the sponsoring organizations. Charitable gambling activity is facing increased competition for available entertainment dollars. One recommendation of the task force was to allow organizations to join together using a satellite connection to offer participation in larger games with larger prizes. This recommendation may enhance the ability of charitable organizations operating bingo games to be competitive.



**SUMMARY OF BILL:**

Charitable or nonprofit organizations may jointly offer bingo games where prizes are pooled to enhance the size of the prize offered and where games are conducted during the organization's normal days of operation.

The Commission may adopt rules for the operation, management and location of the games.

**FISCAL NOTE:** Not requested.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.