

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1405

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Commerce & Labor, February 23, 1998  
Ways & Means, March 2, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to charitable bingo games.

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

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

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Commerce & Labor: 3/27/97, 3/28/97 [DP]; 2/19/98, 2/23/98 [DP].  
Ways & Means: 3/2/98 [DP, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Schow, Chair; Horn, Vice Chair; Franklin, Fraser, Heavey and Newhouse.

**Staff:** David Pringle (786-7448)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Deccio, Vice Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Bauer, Fraser, Kohl, Long, Loveland, Roach, Rossi, Schow, Snyder, Spanel, Spanel, Swecker and Zarelli.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter and McDonald.

**Staff:** Bryon Moore (786-7726)

**Background:** Bingo games may be operated by charitable and nonprofit organizations or agricultural fairs under the authority and regulation of the Gambling Commission. Organizations may only offer bingo three times per week, and bingo may only be offered a total of three times per week at any one location. Only members or employees of the organization may manage the bingo games.

Under current law, Bingo games are limited to the county in which the organization is located, and proceeds may only benefit the organization conducting the game.

During 1996, an industry task force formed by the Gambling Commission studied the declining gambling net proceeds of charitable fund raising activities. It found that charitable gambling activity is facing increased competition. One recommendation was to allow organizations offering bingo to join together using satellite connections and offer players pooled games with larger prizes. This may enhance the competitiveness of the charitable organization's bingo games.

**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 the bingo games are conducted during each organization's normal hours of operation.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Eighty-some organizations in the state count on bingo for some revenue. The concerns that the Governor's Office had on this bill last year regarding high stakes gambling have been satisfied. Charitable organizations rely on bingo to support community activities for children, and this bill could help our organization's members, and others in small towns to compete. The Gambling Commission supports this bill, as these bingo games generate community service dollars that might need other sources support without this bill.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Bill Fritz, Michelle Bernhardt, Don Kauffman, Greg Murray, Washington Civic and Charitable Gaming Association; Carrie Tellefson, Washington State Gambling Commission.