

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5422

As Passed Senate, March 12, 1997

Title: An act relating to professional gambling definitions.

Brief Description: Updating professional gambling definitions.

Sponsors: Senators Schow, Newhouse, Prentice and Horn; by request of Gambling Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 2/4/97, 2/17/97 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/12/97, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Traci Ratzliff (786-7452)

Background: Professional gambling— is prohibited under current law. Persons participating in certain activities defined in statute are considered to be engaged in professional gambling. Generally, these activities include: Conducting, aiding in the operation of, or participating in an illegal gambling activity, such as bookmaking, or greyhound racing; conducting, aiding in the operation of, or participating in a legal gambling activity but in an illegal manner, such as card fixing in blackjack, or operating a high stakes poker or blackjack game.

It is a class B felony to commit professional gambling in the first degree. It is a class C felony to commit professional gambling in the second degree. Professional gambling in the third degree is a gross misdemeanor.

A person is guilty of professional gambling in the first or second degree when he or she engages in professional gambling and meets at least one of several additional elements.

There are concerns that current law does not clearly define what activities constitute the crimes of professional gambling.

Summary of Bill: The definition of professional gambling is modified to clearly delineate the types of specific activity that can be defined as professional gambling. In addition, the statutes defining professional gambling in the first degree and second degree are also modified to clarify the type of activity included under each of these crime classifications.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: There is lack of clarify in current statute regarding what constitutes the crime of professional gambling. This bill clarifies the kind of activity that would constitute professional gambling.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Carrie Tellefson, Washington State Gambling Commission (pro).