

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5560

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, February 25, 1997

Title: An act relating to social card games.

Brief Description: Changing social card game provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Schow, Prentice, Snyder, Anderson and Horn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 2/13/97, 2/2/97 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5560 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Traci Ratzliff (786-7452)

Background: Taverns, restaurants and other businesses primarily engaged in selling food or drink may be licensed to conduct social card games approved by the Gambling Commission.

Only those who are players, defined as those individuals who engage on equal terms with other participants and solely as contestants or bettors, are permitted to participate in card games.

Current law defines a card game as a game of skill, not a game of chance.

Cardrooms are currently permitted to serve as custodians of player supported progressive prize contests operated in conjunction with any card game authorized by the Gambling Commission.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The definition of "social card games" is modified. A card room operator may be authorized to conduct card games such as house-banked or player-funded banked card games or other card games approved by the Gambling Commission.

The definition of "player" is modified to make it consistent with changes made to the definition of "social card games".

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill provides specific authorization for card room operators to conduct house-banked or player-funded banked card games. It also makes the definitions of "social card games" and "player" consistent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 6, 1997.

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

Testimony For: This bill will help those card room operators who use "banked games." Currently, we can only provide certain "player banked" card games. Card room operators cannot currently act as a bank. We would like this privilege and believe it will provide a better game for the players.

Testimony Against: The original bill needs to be modified to give the commission specific direction regarding the ability to authorize house-banked and player-funded banked card games. The language in the original bill is vague and does not give the commission the clear direction it needs on this issue

Testified: Rob Saucier, Steve Downen, George Teeney, Julie Porter, Fred Steiner, Recreational Gaming Association; Frank Miller, Gambling Commission (w/concerns).