

# HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

## HB 2163

**Brief Description:** Creating a program for compulsive gambling education and awareness.

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**Sponsors:** Representatives Wood and Conway

**Hearing:** February 22, 1999

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Gambling Commission, the Lottery Commission and the Horse Racing Commission to implement programs to raise awareness, identify and treat problem gambling.
- Provides funding for these programs from the Gambling Commission, Lottery Commission and Horse Racing Commission.

### BACKGROUND:

Since 1992, several studies and reports have focused attention on the issue of problem gambling. In 1993, the Lottery Commission funded a study on problem gambling among adults and adolescents. An update of this study will be completed in 1999.

There are efforts within the state to raise the awareness of problem gambling. The Washington state affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling offers a toll-free help line as well as other educational services for the problem gambler. The council also works to raise the awareness of gambling addiction among professionals involved in treating addictive behavior. The council does not provide actual treatment.

There are a limited number of mental health professionals in this state who have specific training on the identification and treatment of compulsive gambling. There are no publicly or privately funded inpatient or outpatient treatment programs for compulsive gamblers in Washington. Gamblers Anonymous has had a presence in Washington since 1961.

The Gambling Commission, the Lottery Commission and the Horse Racing Commission are

directed to develop and display through their licensees and retail outlets, informational material on problem gambling. These agencies also contribute to the annual support of the state council's operations. Many of the tribes operating casinos in Washington have made some contribution to the council.

All moneys received by the Gambling Commission are deposited into the Gambling Revolving Fund. The fund is non-appropriated and expenditures are made for purposes of commission business as authorized by the commission. The balance in the fund fluctuates daily.

Until July 1, 2001, all moneys paid to the Horse Racing Commission are retained by the commission for its operation. Any sum not expended at the close of the fiscal biennium goes to the fair fund. After July 1, 2001, the commission retains 50 percent and the remainder is distributed to the general fund, the fair fund and the state trade fair fund. Any sum not expended at the close of the fiscal biennium goes to the general fund.

Expenditures from the state lottery account must be used for specified purposes such as the payment of prizes (a minimum of 45 percent), the operation and maintenance of the lottery, the purchase and promotion of lottery games, and the payment of agent compensation. A portion of the money in this account is deposited in the state general fund. There is no specific authorization to expend lottery account revenue for the purpose of supporting efforts to address the problem of compulsive gambling.

#### **SUMMARY OF BILL:**

The Gambling Commission is directed to implement programs to increase awareness and education about compulsive gambling, to curb compulsive gambling and to identify and treat problem and compulsive gamblers. The Gambling Commission must consult with the Lottery Commission and the Horse Racing Commission in establishing these programs.

The Gambling Commission may contract with other public and private agencies, organizations and individuals in carrying out these programs. The commission may require its house-banked or player-funded card room licensees to develop a plan for dealing with the problem gambler including access to information for the gambler and training for employees in identifying the compulsive gambler.

Funding to develop and implement these programs is contributed by the Gambling Commission, the Lottery Commission and the Horse Racing Commission. Ten percent of surplus funds from the Gambling Revolving Fund must be allocated annually for this purpose. Three hundred thousand dollars from the state lottery account and 10 percent of the

unexpended funds from the Horse Racing Commission must be placed in the gambling revolving fund annually for this purpose. The directive to the Horse Racing Commission does not become effective until July 1, 2001.

Expenditures are authorized from the state lottery account as part of the lottery advertising budget for the programs established by the Gambling Commission on prevention and treatment of and education on compulsive gambling.

**APPROPRIATIONS:** Three hundred thousand dollars are appropriated from the state lottery account to the Gambling Commission.

**RULES AUTHORITY:** The bill does not contain provisions addressing the rule making powers of an agency.

**FISCAL NOTE:** Requested February 17, 1999.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except section 3, which takes effect July 1, 2001, contingent upon repeal of sunset provisions contained in RCW 43.131.396.