

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5549

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions, February 26, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to a study of problem or pathological gambling in existing public drug and alcohol treatment programs.

**Brief Description:** Requiring a study of problem and pathological gambling among persons in drug and alcohol treatment programs.

**Sponsors:** Senators Prentice and Winsley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 2/22/01, 2/26/01 [DP-WM, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Fairley, Franklin, Patterson, Rasmussen and Regala.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton, Deccio, Hochstatter and Honeyford.

**Staff:** Catherine Mele (786-7470)

**Background:** The Washington State Council on Problem Gambling offers a toll-free information line and referral service for problem gamblers. The council does not provide treatment to gamblers, but does provide referrals to various treatment options. The information line gives contact numbers for groups such as Gamblers Anonymous. If the caller requests, the information line gives referrals for outpatient treatment providers who charge a fee for their services. There are no inpatient treatment facilities for problem gamblers in Washington. The council also provides problem gambling awareness education materials and problem gambling training for treatment providers and the gambling industry.

There are concerns that Washington needs to provide more treatment options for problem gamblers. One of the options includes requiring existing treatment counselors working in public treatment programs to become trained in problem gambling recognition and treatment.

**Summary of Bill:** The Department of Social and Health Services Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy and the Washington State Council on Problem Gambling must conduct a study to determine if persons receiving public treatment for alcohol or substance abuse are also pathological or problem gamblers. The report is due December 1, 2002.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 14, 2001.

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

**Testimony For:** The Recreational Gaming Association supports this bill. We are involved in the gambling industry workgroup created by the Council on Problem Gambling and helped develop this recommendation. We need information about dual addictions in this state and whether or not we can use existing treatment networks to help problem gamblers. A study should be done because this is a serious problem.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Gary Hanson, WA State Council on Problem Gambling; Dolores A. Chiechi, Recreational Gaming Assn.; Mike Moran, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe.