

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5441

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor*

Title: An act relating to bookmaking.

Brief Description: Amending bookmaking provisions.

Sponsor(s): Senators Rasmussen, Nelson, Hayner and Johnson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor, March 26, 1991, DP.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE & LABOR**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 10 members:
Representatives Heavey, Chair; Cole, Vice Chair; Fuhrman,
Ranking Minority Member; Franklin; Jones; R. King; O'Brien;
Prentice; Vance; and Wilson.

Staff: Jim Kelley (786-7166).

Background: "Bookmaking" is defined as accepting bets as a business, rather than in a casual or personal fashion, upon the outcome of future contingent events.

Under the gambling code, the following activities are classified as felonies, punishable by a fine of not more than \$100,000 and/or imprisonment of not more than five years: (1) Conducting any gambling activity for which a license is required without obtaining a license; (2) knowingly causing, aiding, abetting, or conspiring to cause a person to violate any provision of the gambling code; and (3) engaging in professional gambling.

Under the gambling code, the following activities are classified as gross misdemeanors, punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 and/or imprisonment of not more than one year: (1) False reporting to the Gambling Commission; (2) knowingly causing, aiding, abetting, or conspiring to cause a person to violate any rule adopted pursuant to the gambling code; (3) perpetrating a fraud; and (4) unauthorized transmitting of gambling information by telephone, telegraph, radio, semaphore or similar means, or installing or maintaining equipment for that purpose.

Summary of Bill: "Bookmaking" is defined as accepting bets, upon the outcome of future contingent events, as a business or in which the bettor is charged a fee or "vigorish" for the opportunity to place a bet.

Felonies under the gambling code are made class B felonies, punishable by a fine of not more than \$20,000 and/or imprisonment of not more than 10 years.

Professional gambling is divided into three degrees: professional gambling in the first degree is a class B felony; professional gambling in the second degree is a class C felony; and professional gambling in the third degree is a gross misdemeanor.

The maximum penalty for gross misdemeanors is the punishment provided by the criminal code. Currently, the maximum punishment for a gross misdemeanor under the criminal code is a fine of not more than \$5,000 and/or imprisonment of not more than one year.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill will make the gambling code easier to understand and enforce. It is the result of much work.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Randee Kerns, Gambling Commission (in favor); and Randy Hamilton, Chehalis Police Department (in favor).