

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2340

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

Title: An act relating to discrimination by clubs.

Brief Description: Establishing procedures to revoke the liquor licenses of discriminatory golf and country clubs.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Belcher, Heavey, Wang, Brough, Wineberry, Brekke, Locke, Miller, Valle, Peery, Fraser, Riley, G. Cole, Forner, Hargrove, H. Myers, G. Fisher, Rasmussen, R. Meyers, Morris, Cantwell, Ludwig, Anderson, Rayburn, Jacobsen, J. Kohl, Orr, Spanel, Ogden, Leonard, Rust, Pruitt, Ferguson and Sprenkle.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor, February 4, 1992, DP.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE & LABOR**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 8 members: Representatives Heavey, Chair; G. Cole, Vice Chair; Lisk, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Franklin; Jones; R. King; O'Brien; and Prentice.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 3 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Ranking Minority Member; Vance; and Wilson.

Staff: Jim Kelley (786-7166).

Background: A class H liquor license allows the holder to sell beer, wine and spirits by the individual glass. A club may obtain a class H liquor license. Golf and country clubs are treated as clubs by the Liquor Control Board.

Summary of Bill: Golf and country clubs that offer memberships to men and women are not entitled to a class H liquor license if they discriminate on the basis of gender in granting access to facilities and services that are available to all members.

If, at any time prior to a hearing on a license revocation, the licensee enters into an agreement to end the

discriminatory practice, the notice of revocation shall be dismissed or suspended until the board determines that the discriminatory practice has ended.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill deals with discrimination subsidized by the state in the form of open space tax breaks. Equal access to facilities is not good enough. Women do not enjoy the same opportunity as men to play golf at the most desirable times. At some clubs it is not just a matter of preferential tee times. For instance, at one club women may not purchase a stock membership, there are restricted areas on certain days, and no tee times for women before 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The national golf organizations are increasingly taking the position that sex discrimination should not be tolerated.

Testimony Against: Two years ago, a former Supreme Court justice and a committee reviewed the practices of golf clubs. They found no discrimination. Both women and men like to have their own times to play. The crux of the problem is Saturday mornings. Traditionally, this time has been reserved for male golfers. The overwhelming majority of golfers like the system as it is.

Witnesses: Representative Jennifer Belcher, Prime Sponsor; Barbara Neeley, Teed Off (in favor); Caroline Seaman, Laura Lundgaard, Don Bryan and Steve Lind, Olympia Country and Golf Club (opposed); and Stu Halsan and John Bodenhamer, Washington State Federation of Clubs (opposed).