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**Commerce & Labor Committee**

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**HB 3119**

**Brief Description:** Requiring a super-majority of the legislature increase betting limits.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Conway, Bush and Lantz.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires a 60 percent majority vote of the Legislature to increase betting limits for gambling activities.

**Hearing Date:** 2/2/04

**Staff:** Susan Kavanaugh (786-7106).

**Background:**

The Washington State Gambling Commission (Commission) is authorized in statute to regulate the type, manner, and scope, specifically including the extent of wagers, of gambling activities that are authorized in Washington.

With regard to card rooms, for example, single wager limits have increased several times:

- When player-banked card rooms were initially authorized in 1974, the limit on a single wager was \$2. The limit has been raised a number of times and is now \$25.
- In 1997, when house-banked card rooms were initially authorized, the maximum single wager was \$25. Within a year, the limit increased to \$100 for experienced house banked card rooms.
- The Commission is currently considering a proposal to increase the maximum single wager limit for house-banked card rooms to \$300.

**Summary of Bill:**

Authority to increase wager limits is reserved exclusively to the Legislature.

It is noted that in establishing a maximum wager, the Legislature intends that wagers in excess of the maximum are prohibited. Therefore, it is stated, increases in wagers are an elimination of the prohibition and, by the Constitution, a 60 percent majority vote of the Legislature is required.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 28, 2004.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.