

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5953

As Passed Senate, March 15, 2005

Title: An act relating to handicapping contests conducted by class 1 racing associations.

Brief Description: Authorizing class 1 racing associations to conduct handicapping contests.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research & Development (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Deccio, Keiser, Rasmussen and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 2/25/05, 2/28/05 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/15/05, 35-11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5953 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Parlette, Ranking Minority Member; Brown, Hewitt, Honeyford and Keiser.

Staff: John Dziedzic (786-7784)

Background: All forms of gambling, except those specifically authorized by, or excluded from the Gambling Act, are illegal. Parimutuel betting on horse racing, as authorized under chapter 67.16, and regulated by the Horse Racing Commission, is excluded from the Gambling Act.

In a "handicapping contest" participants pay a fee, and predict one or more pre-established combinations of outcomes of more than one horse race. The participant whose predictions are determined to be closest to the actual results wins the aggregated total of fees paid, less the cost of administering the contest.

Fees paid to enter a handicapping contest are kept separate from and do not affect the parimutuel wagering pool.

Emerald Downs is currently the only class 1 racing association in Washington.

Summary of Bill: The Horse Racing Commission is authorized to establish rules for the conduct of handicapping contests by class 1 racing associations. Handicapping contests conducted in accord with the rules established by the Horse Racing Commission are not subject to regulation under the Gambling Act.

Bill Compared to Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Handicapping contests have been conducted at Emerald Downs for many years, but without charging a fee to participants, which has limited the kind and size of prizes that can be offered. Allowing the contests authorized under this bill is consistent with the facility's policy of offering only gambling options as are directly related to horse racing.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Ron Crockett, Susie Sourwine, Jim Halstrom, Northwest Racing Assn. (Emerald Downs). OTHER: Bob Leichner, WA Horse Racing Commission.