



What's New and What's News

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE LEGISLATURE & OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

August 2008

This newsletter is dedicated to keeping the legislature and other governmental agencies informed of "What's New" in the Gambling Commission and "What's News."

2009 Agency Request Legislation

We will be forwarding two requests for legislation to the Governor's Office.

Penalties for Minors Who Gamble

In the 2007 and 2008 sessions, we proposed agency request legislation (HB 1345/SB 5375) to:

- Allow our Agents to issue civil infractions to underage gamblers.
- Impose a \$125 fine (\$256 with statutory assessments) and the possibility of four hours of community supervision and court costs.
- Clearly state the age to gamble, which is usually eighteen.
- Allow employers (licensees) to conduct their own in-house self-compliance checks for employee training. These self-compliance programs would have to be authorized under Gambling rules.
- *Require underage gamblers to forfeit his/her winnings. This is a new provision that was not in the 2007/2008 bills.*



We appreciate the broad support we have received for these bills.

- Representative Alex Wood, 3rd District and former ex officio member of the Gambling Commission, prime sponsored HB 1345.
- Senator Ed Murray, 43rd District, prime sponsored SB 5375.

In the 2007 session, the bill passed the House by a 94:1 vote, but died in Senate Rules.

In the 2008 session, the bill passed the House by a 96:1 vote, made it out of the Senate Committee, but died on the Senate floor calendar during the last day of session. No one has testified against these bills.

We requested the legislation because:

- Emphasis patrols for underage gambling that our Agents have conducted with Liquor Control Board Agents for the past five years show that card room licensees allow the underage person to gamble approximately 40% of the time. The compliance rate is improving though. So far in 2008, the compliance rate has been 75%.
- In a 2005 Public Opinion Survey we conducted, 44% of the public surveyed said they were "very concerned" about underage gambling and 25% were "somewhat concerned."

Although the emphasis patrols have focused on the operators and dealers, current laws do not provide any penalty against minors who gamble.

There are penalties for minors who engage in other similar activities; for example, if a person under 18 tries to buy tobacco, cigarettes, or alcohol they can be issued a civil citation.

Having a civil penalty for minors under 18 who gamble would provide better enforcement, as penalties would then apply to all parties involved – the minor, the card room operator, and the card dealer.

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Our Mission: Protect the Public by Ensuring that Gambling is Legal and Honest.

Interesting Investigation

Two defendants in a suspected dog fighting ring were recently sentenced in Spokane County Superior Court to eight months for felony dog fighting and operating an illegal kennel. Both defendants were ordered to pay \$16,000 to animal control officials for the care of the dogs since they were seized.

Our Agents assisted animal control officers and deputy sheriffs from Spokane County during the execution of a search warrant on April 24, 2007.



Eight pit bulls, including six adults with wounds, scars and other injuries were seized. Many of the dogs had been tethered on heavy chains which were used to build up the dogs' muscles and increase stamina for fighting.

Also seized were firearms, a treadmill, training logs, dog fighting periodicals, performance enhancing supplements and a veterinary kit which included sutures, antibiotics and syringes.

Animal fighting in Washington is a Class C felony. Individuals who own, possess, or train animals for the purpose of fighting, sponsor or attend animal fights, may be convicted of animal fighting.

Typically, animal fights involve illegal wagering and possession of gambling records, both of which may be felony crimes. As such, our Agents worked closely with local and federal authorities to investigate animal fighting.

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New Legislative Team Member



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Greetings from the newest legislative team member! I was introduced as the new Assistant Director of Licensing Operations in the November 2005 edition of this newsletter.

I have been with the agency since 1992 and have worked in Field Operations, Tribal Gaming, Financial Investigations and Criminal Intelligence.

I am licensed by the Washington State Board of Accountancy and am a member of the Washington Society of Certified Public Accountants (WSCPAs). I am President of the local WSCPAs Chapter and Committee Chair of the WSCPAs Professional Conduct Committee, which investigates alleged ethical violations of society members.

I look forward to working with the legislature and other governmental agencies.

Agency Request Legislation Continued

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Allow the Commission to Set Amusement Game Locations

When we recently responded to a petition for rule change, we discovered the law pertaining to who determines where amusement games may be located, the Commission or the Legislature, is not clear.

There has been a long standing interpretation that we can authorize locations, in addition to locations authorized by the Legislature. This proposal would clearly allow us to set locations, too.

If legislation is not passed, amusement games will have to be removed from nearly 400 department and grocery stores, and skating facilities. This would result in a loss of revenue to these businesses and a loss of tax revenue to local jurisdictions. Additionally, we would lose approximately \$82,000 in licensing fees each year.