

Initiative Measure No. 582 filed March 26, 2013

BILL REQUEST - CODE REVISER'S OFFICE

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Initiative Measure No. 582

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AN ACT Relating to internet poker play within the state of Washington; amending RCW 9.46.010, 9.46.0265, 9.46.070, and 9.46.071; adding new sections to chapter 9.46 RCW; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The intent of this act is to authorize the play of real money internet poker, to direct the Washington state gambling commission to license operators providing internet poker, and to regulate licensed operators' activity within the state of Washington.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 9.46 RCW to read as follows:

The legislature authorizes internet poker games to be offered by licensed operators and played from personal computers and mobile devices. Play is restricted to persons connecting to the internet from within the state of Washington who are twenty-one years of age and older.

Sec. 3. RCW 9.46.010 and 1996 c 101 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

The public policy of the state of Washington on gambling is to keep the criminal element out of gambling and to promote the social welfare of the people by limiting the nature and scope of gambling activities and by strict regulation and control.

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature, recognizing the close relationship between professional gambling and organized crime, to restrain all persons from seeking profit from professional gambling activities in this state; to restrain all persons from patronizing such professional gambling activities; to safeguard the public against the evils induced by common gamblers and common gambling houses engaged in professional gambling; and at the same time, both to preserve the freedom of the press and to avoid restricting participation by individuals in activities and social pastimes, which activities and social pastimes are more for amusement rather than for profit, do not maliciously affect the public, and do not breach the peace.

The legislature further declares that the raising of funds for the promotion of bona fide charitable or nonprofit organizations is in the public interest as is participation in such activities and social pastimes as are hereinafter in this chapter authorized.

The legislature further declares that the conducting of bingo, raffles, and amusement games and the operation of punchboards, pull-tabs, card games and other social pastimes, when conducted pursuant to the provisions of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto, are hereby authorized, as are only such lotteries for which no valuable consideration has been paid or agreed to be paid as hereinafter in this chapter provided.

The legislature further declares that fishing derbies shall not constitute any form of gambling and shall not be considered as a lottery, a raffle, or an amusement game and shall not be subject to the provisions of this chapter or any rules and regulations adopted hereunder.

The legislature further declares that raffles authorized by the fish and wildlife commission involving hunting big game animals or wild turkeys shall not be subject to the provisions of this chapter or any rules and regulations adopted hereunder, with the exception of this section and RCW 9.46.400.

The legislature further declares that conducting and participating in internet poker games, when conducted pursuant to the provisions of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto, are hereby authorized.

All factors incident to the activities authorized in this chapter shall be closely controlled, and the provisions of this chapter shall be liberally construed to achieve such end.

Sec. 4. RCW 9.46.0265 and 1997 c 118 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) "Player," as used in this chapter, means:

(a) A natural person who engages, on equal terms with the other participants, and solely as a contestant or bettor, in any form of gambling in which no person may receive or become entitled to receive any profit therefrom other than personal gambling winnings, and without otherwise rendering any material assistance to the establishment, conduct, or operation of a particular gambling activity. A natural person who gambles at a social game of chance on equal terms with the other participants shall not be considered as rendering material assistance to the establishment, conduct, or operation of the social game merely by performing, without fee or remuneration, acts directed toward the arrangement or facilitation of the game, such as inviting persons to play, permitting the use of premises for the game, or supplying cards or other equipment to be used in the games; and

(b) A participant in an internet poker game playing against one or more other players from a personal computer or mobile device using client-side software that only provides information necessary for the individual's play.

(2) A person who engages in "bookmaking" as defined in this chapter is not a "player." A person who pays a fee or "vigorish" enabling him or her to place a wager with a bookmaker, or pays a fee other than as authorized by this chapter to participate in a card game, contest of chance, lottery, or gambling activity, is not a player.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 9.46 RCW to read as follows:

"Internet poker games," as used in this chapter, mean poker variant card games that are played over the internet from personal computers or mobile devices, through the use of dedicated software, where play is between two or more players, and where the software and operator have no interest or influence in the outcome of the competition.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 9.46 RCW to read as follows:

"Operator," as used in this chapter, means any person, association, or organization who provides software and financial transaction services for the purpose of internet poker games and is authorized and licensed to provide such services.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 9.46 RCW to read as follows:

(1) An operator must have a physical location within the state of Washington in which all internet servers and customer support staff are located.

(2) An operator must hold in trust, in a secure and segregated account in a Washington state bank, and provide for the safe and efficient handling of player funds. A transaction between a player and an operator must be completed in no more than three business days from a player's request for the transaction.

(3) An operator must have demonstrable experience in electronic or internet gaming, or both, and must be able to demonstrate that its

hardware and software for the purpose of providing internet poker games is safe, reliable, and fair.

(4) An operator must have a demonstrable player documentation protocol to provide accurate player identification and ensure players are at least twenty-one years of age and located within the state of Washington.

(5) An operator is required to make available and easily accessible educational information on the game of poker and on dealing with problem gambling situations.

(6) An operator may conduct no limit games, with no limits restricting bet sizes or table stakes beyond those established by the operator in the course of structuring the game.

(7) No restrictions may be placed on the number of tables an operator may make available for play or the number of tables a player may play concurrently.

Sec. 8. RCW 9.46.070 and 2012 c 116 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

The commission shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) To authorize and issue licenses for a period not to exceed one year to bona fide charitable or nonprofit organizations approved by the commission meeting the requirements of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto permitting said organizations to conduct bingo games, raffles, amusement games, and social card games, to utilize punchboards and pull-tabs in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto and to revoke or suspend said licenses for violation of any provisions of this chapter or any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto: PROVIDED, That the commission shall not deny a license to an otherwise qualified applicant in an effort to limit the number of licenses to be issued: PROVIDED FURTHER, That the commission or director shall not issue, deny, suspend, or revoke any license because of considerations of race, sex, creed, color, or national origin: AND PROVIDED FURTHER, That the commission may

authorize the director to temporarily issue or suspend licenses subject to final action by the commission;

(2) To authorize and issue licenses for a period not to exceed one year to any person, association, or organization operating a business primarily engaged in the selling of items of food or drink for consumption on the premises, approved by the commission meeting the requirements of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto permitting said person, association, or organization to utilize punchboards and pull-tabs and to conduct social card games as a commercial stimulant in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto and to revoke or suspend said licenses for violation of any provisions of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto: PROVIDED, That the commission shall not deny a license to an otherwise qualified applicant in an effort to limit the number of licenses to be issued: PROVIDED FURTHER, That the commission may authorize the director to temporarily issue or suspend licenses subject to final action by the commission;

(3) To authorize and issue licenses for a period not to exceed one year to any person, association, or organization approved by the commission meeting the requirements of this chapter and meeting the requirements of any rules and regulations adopted by the commission pursuant to this chapter as now or hereafter amended, permitting said person, association, or organization to conduct or operate amusement games in such manner and at such locations as the commission may determine. The commission may authorize the director to temporarily issue or suspend licenses subject to final action by the commission;

(4) To authorize, require, and issue, for a period not to exceed one year, such licenses as the commission may by rule provide, to any person, association, or organization to engage in the selling, distributing, or otherwise supplying or in the manufacturing of devices for use within this state for those activities authorized by this chapter. The commission may authorize the director to temporarily issue or suspend licenses subject to final action by the commission;

(5) To establish a schedule of annual license fees for carrying on specific gambling activities upon the premises, and for such other activities as may be licensed by the commission, which fees shall provide to the commission not less than an amount of money adequate to cover all costs incurred by the commission relative to licensing under this chapter and the enforcement by the commission of the provisions of this chapter and rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto: PROVIDED, That all licensing fees shall be submitted with an application therefor and such portion of said fee as the commission may determine, based upon its cost of processing and investigation, shall be retained by the commission upon the withdrawal or denial of any such license application as its reasonable expense for processing the application and investigation into the granting thereof: PROVIDED FURTHER, That if in a particular case the basic license fee established by the commission for a particular class of license is less than the commission's actual expenses to investigate that particular application, the commission may at any time charge to that applicant such additional fees as are necessary to pay the commission for those costs. The commission may decline to proceed with its investigation and no license shall be issued until the commission has been fully paid therefor by the applicant: AND PROVIDED FURTHER, That the commission may establish fees for the furnishing by it to licensees of identification stamps to be affixed to such devices and equipment as required by the commission and for such other special services or programs required or offered by the commission, the amount of each of these fees to be not less than is adequate to offset the cost to the commission of the stamps and of administering their dispersal to licensees or the cost of administering such other special services, requirements or programs;

(6) To prescribe the manner and method of payment of taxes, fees and penalties to be paid to or collected by the commission;

(7) To require that applications for all licenses contain such information as may be required by the commission: PROVIDED, That all persons (a) having a managerial or ownership interest in any gambling activity, or the building in which any gambling activity occurs, or

the equipment to be used for any gambling activity, or (b) participating as an employee in the operation of any gambling activity, shall be listed on the application for the license and the applicant shall certify on the application, under oath, that the persons named on the application are all of the persons known to have an interest in any gambling activity, building, or equipment by the person making such application: PROVIDED FURTHER, That the commission shall require fingerprinting and national criminal history background checks on any persons seeking licenses, certifications, or permits under this chapter or of any person holding an interest in any gambling activity, building, or equipment to be used therefor, or of any person participating as an employee in the operation of any gambling activity. All national criminal history background checks shall be conducted using fingerprints submitted to the United States department of justice-federal bureau of investigation. The commission must establish rules to delineate which persons named on the application are subject to national criminal history background checks. In identifying these persons, the commission must take into consideration the nature, character, size, and scope of the gambling activities requested by the persons making such applications;

(8) To require that any license holder maintain records as directed by the commission and submit such reports as the commission may deem necessary;

(9) To require that all income from bingo games, raffles, and amusement games be recorded and reported as established by rule or regulation of the commission to the extent deemed necessary by considering the scope and character of the gambling activity in such a manner that will disclose gross income from any gambling activity, amounts received from each player, the nature and value of prizes, and the fact of distributions of such prizes to the winners thereof;

(10) To regulate and establish maximum limitations on income derived from bingo. In establishing limitations pursuant to this subsection the commission shall take into account (a) the nature, character, and scope of the activities of the licensee; (b) the source of all other income of the licensee; and (c) the percentage or extent

to which income derived from bingo is used for charitable, as distinguished from nonprofit, purposes. However, the commission's powers and duties granted by this subsection are discretionary and not mandatory;

(11) To regulate and establish the type and scope of and manner of conducting the gambling activities authorized by this chapter, including but not limited to, the extent of wager, money, or other thing of value which may be wagered or contributed or won by a player in any such activities;

(12) To regulate the collection of and the accounting for the fee which may be imposed by an organization, corporation, or person licensed to conduct a social card game on a person desiring to become a player in a social card game in accordance with RCW 9.46.0282;

(13) To cooperate with and secure the cooperation of county, city, and other local or state agencies in investigating any matter within the scope of its duties and responsibilities;

(14) In accordance with RCW 9.46.080, to adopt such rules and regulations as are deemed necessary to carry out the purposes and provisions of this chapter. All rules and regulations shall be adopted pursuant to the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW;

(15) To set forth for the perusal of counties, city-counties, cities and towns, model ordinances by which any legislative authority thereof may enter into the taxing of any gambling activity authorized by this chapter;

(16)(a) To establish and regulate a maximum limit on salaries or wages which may be paid to persons employed in connection with activities conducted by bona fide charitable or nonprofit organizations and authorized by this chapter, where payment of such persons is allowed, and to regulate and establish maximum limits for other expenses in connection with such authorized activities, including but not limited to rent or lease payments. However, the commissioner's powers and duties granted by this subsection are discretionary and not mandatory.

(b) In establishing these maximum limits the commission shall take into account the amount of income received, or expected to be received, from the class of activities to which the limits will apply and the amount of money the games could generate for authorized charitable or nonprofit purposes absent such expenses. The commission may also take into account, in its discretion, other factors, including but not limited to, the local prevailing wage scale and whether charitable purposes are benefited by the activities;

(17) To authorize, require, and issue for a period not to exceed one year such licenses or permits, for which the commission may by rule provide, to any person to work for any operator of any gambling activity authorized by this chapter in connection with that activity, or any manufacturer, supplier, or distributor of devices for those activities in connection with such business. The commission may authorize the director to temporarily issue or suspend licenses subject to final action by the commission. The commission shall not require that persons working solely as volunteers in an authorized activity conducted by a bona fide charitable or bona fide nonprofit organization, who receive no compensation of any kind for any purpose from that organization, and who have no managerial or supervisory responsibility in connection with that activity, be licensed to do such work. The commission may require that licensees employing such unlicensed volunteers submit to the commission periodically a list of the names, addresses, and dates of birth of the volunteers. If any volunteer is not approved by the commission, the commission may require that the licensee not allow that person to work in connection with the licensed activity;

(18) To publish and make available at the office of the commission or elsewhere to anyone requesting it a list of the commission licensees, including the name, address, type of license, and license number of each licensee;

(19) To establish guidelines for determining what constitutes active membership in bona fide nonprofit or charitable organizations for the purposes of this chapter;

(20) To renew the license of every person who applies for renewal within six months after being honorably discharged, removed, or released from active military service in the armed forces of the United States upon payment of the renewal fee applicable to the license period, if there is no cause for denial, suspension, or revocation of the license;

(21) To issue licenses under subsections (1) through (4) of this section that are valid for a period of up to eighteen months, if it chooses to do so, in order to transition to the use of the business licensing services program through the department of revenue; ~~((and))~~

(22) To authorize and issue licenses for a period not to exceed one year to any person, association, or organization approved by the commission meeting the requirements of this chapter and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto permitting said person, association, or organization to conduct or operate internet poker games in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto. The commission must require an independent audit of software used to transmit game activity to assure security of information, recognize problematic behavior, and verify the randomness of the card generator prior to issuing a license and before any renewal. The commission may authorize the director to temporarily issue or suspend licenses subject to final action by the commission; and

(23) To perform all other matters and things necessary to carry out the purposes and provisions of this chapter.

Sec. 9. RCW 9.46.071 and 2005 c 369 s 9 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The legislature recognizes that some individuals in this state are problem or pathological gamblers. Because the state promotes and regulates gambling through the activities of the state lottery commission, the Washington horse racing commission, and the Washington state gambling commission, the state has the responsibility to continue to provide resources for the support of services for problem and pathological gamblers. Therefore, the Washington state gambling

commission, the Washington horse racing commission, and the state lottery commission shall jointly develop informational signs concerning problem and pathological gambling which include a toll-free hot line number for problem and pathological gamblers. The signs shall be placed in the establishments of gambling licensees, horse racing licensees, and lottery retailers. Internet poker providers shall display this information prominently on their web sites and include a link to the information in the poker lobby. In addition, the Washington state gambling commission, the Washington horse racing commission, and the state lottery commission may also contract with other qualified entities to provide public awareness, training, and other services to ensure the intent of this section is fulfilled.

(2)(a) During any period in which RCW 82.04.285(2) is in effect, the commission may not increase fees payable by licensees under its jurisdiction for the purpose of funding services for problem and pathological gambling. Any fee imposed or increased by the commission, for the purpose of funding these services, before July 1, 2005, shall have no force and effect after July 1, 2005.

(b) During any period in which RCW 82.04.285(2) is not in effect:

(i) The commission, the Washington state horse racing commission, and the state lottery commission may contract for services, in addition to those authorized in subsection (1) of this section, to assist in providing for treatment of problem and pathological gambling; and

(ii) The commission may increase fees payable by (~~licenses~~ ~~licensees~~) licensees under its jurisdiction for the purpose of funding the services authorized in this section for problem and pathological gamblers.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the intent, policies, and purposes of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the

remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.