SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 6137

As of January 22, 2026

Title: An act relating to bolstering the regulated sports wagering industry.

Brief Description: Concerning the regulated sports wagering industry.

Sponsors: Senators Cortes, Nobles, Saldaña, Stanford and Wellman.

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Business, Trade & Economic Development: 1/22/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits wagering on a collegiate sport or athletic event that involves a college located within Washington in tribal casinos.
- Prohibits wagering on the performance or nonperformance of an athlete enrolled in a college located in Washington.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS, TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Staff: William Bridges (786-7312)

Background: Class III Gaming and the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. Class III gaming includes banking card games, slot machines, pari-mutuel lotteries, electronic games of chance, and sports wagering. The federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) provides a framework for Indian tribes and states to negotiate, on a government-to-government basis, for how class III gaming will be conducted within a state and on tribal lands. Under the IGRA, class III gaming is only authorized on tribal land if the governing body of the Indian tribe that has jurisdiction over that land adopts an ordinance or resolution authorizing such activities.

Sports Wagering in Washington. In Washington, sports wagering is permitted only at a

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tribal gaming facility of a federally recognized Indian tribe that amends its class III gaming compact to authorize the tribe to conduct sports wagering on its land. Gambling information may be transmitted over the internet for sports wagering. A wager may be placed and accepted at a tribe's gaming facility only while the customer placing the wager is physically present on the premises of that tribe's gaming facility.

With exceptions, wagers may be placed on any of the following sporting events, athletic events, or competitions:

- a professional sport or athletic event;
- a collegiate sport or athletic event;
- an Olympic or international sports competition or event;
- an electronic sports or esports competition or event;
- a combination of the above sporting events, athletic events, or competitions; and
- a portion of any of the above sporting events, athletic events, or competitions.

Wagers may not be placed on a collegiate sport or athletic event that is offered or sponsored by, or played in connection with, a public or private post-secondary educational institution located within Washington. Wagering on any minor league sport is also prohibited.

Summary of Bill: Permitting Sports Wagering on College Sports with Limitations. Wagering on a collegiate sport or athletic event that involves a post-secondary educational institution located within Washington is permitted. Wagers on the performance or nonperformance of an individual athlete that is enrolled in a post-secondary educational institution that is located within Washington are prohibited.

A tribe's class III gaming compact may be amended pursuant to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act to authorize the tribe to conduct and operate sports wagering on any Indian lands. For gambling information transmitted over the internet, a wager may be placed and accepted at a tribe's gaming facility if the customer placing the wager is physically present on the premises of any tribe's gaming facility.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 2026. Fiscal note on House companion HB 2205 requested on January 5, 2026.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Since Washington authorized on-premises sports wagering in 2020, Tribes have been unable to offer bets on local colleges and universities, like UW and Gonzaga. However, it is well understood that Washingtonians are already wagering on in-state collegiate sports. It is happening through the illicit market and

the “grey” market. This bill will authorize sports wagering on in-state universities, but with one limitation: in-game proposition bets on specifically named individuals that attend a Washington college or university will not be allowed.

The market for sports wagering vendors is consolidating, resulting in difficulties for more rural and smaller properties to find a non-tribal sports wagering vendor. The purpose of the minor revision ensures that all tribes have access and opportunity to offer retail sports wagering. Without this change, it wouldn’t be surprising if only the larger properties along I-5 and I-90 are able to offer retail sports wagering. Of course, no tribes will be forced to partner together. It will be up to each tribe to determine if a partnership makes sense for their property.

Tribal gaming has been one of the most successful public policy partnerships in this state. It has created thousands of jobs, funds essential tribal government services and lifts up the surrounding community. A 2025 economic report shows tribal governments in Washington generate $7.4 billion in economic activity, create tens of thousands of jobs and reinvest every dollar back into the community.

Tribal gaming in Washington has some of the strongest regulatory standards in the country. Sports wagering in Washington is also strongly regulated. This bill keeps sports wagering firmly within the regulated tribal marketplace, where transactions are monitored, suspicious activity is reported, and responsible-gaming requirements are enforced. Tribal casinos have three layers of regulation: tribal, state and federal. That matters to consumers, and to the integrity of sports.

CON: WSU and its student athletes are incredibly accessible on campus and online. An NCAA survey of 6,800 student athletes produced in November found more than one in four men’s basketball and football players had on campus contact with individuals who had placed bets on their games and more than one third of basketball players had endured online abuse.

This bill is not a shift of gambling from the black market to the regulated market. This is a dramatic expansion that opens a massive new market for sports betting on WSU games. All the benefits will go to others; all the consequences will lie with WSU. This bill will not shut down the black market where betting, both allowed and not allowed by this bill, will still thrive.

WSU rejects the premise that changing the wagering venue changes human behavior in any way. There has been a rash of sports gaming scandals making headlines recently as last week; this is not the time to consider a collegiate gambling bill. If WSU thought dramatically expanding gambling on WSU games was the answer, we would have brought this to you ourselves, but we didn’t.

OTHER: We want to ensure our student athletes are safe and supported. At UW, all student

athletes complete a sports wagering training, which includes setting up safety measures and reviews social media and mental health best practices. We also have wellness coordinators, psychologists, and other support staff on board to assist student athletes. Additionally, Big Ten provides sports monitors wagering services across the conference. It is critically important that the ban on individual proposition betting remains in the bill. The NCAA has also urged state gambling commissions to do the same.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Chairman Ron Allen, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe; Kevin Zenishek, Kalispel Tribe; Bill Sterud, Chairman, Puyallup Tribe of Indians; Yale Rowe, General Manager, Emerald Queen Casino.

CON: Chris Mulick, Washington State University; Brad Corbin, Washington State University.

OTHER: Morgan Hickel, University of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.