

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6163

As of January 12, 2000

Title: An act relating to equal access to facilities of golf clubs.

Brief Description: Denying open space designation to golf clubs that do not allow equal access to club facilities.

Sponsors: Senators Fairley, Wojahn, Thibaudeau and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/14/2000.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Background: The Washington State Constitution requires all property to be valued at its highest and best use, meaning its most valuable use. The open space law allows property to be valued at its *current use* which often times is a significantly lower value than its *highest and best use*. Golf clubs can qualify for the Open Space Act and receive this reduction in value. Not all golf clubs have the open space classification.

Summary of Bill: Classification as open space land– is removed upon determination by the assessor, after giving the owner written notice and an opportunity to be heard, that all or a portion of such land is in use as a golf club owned and operated by a private club with a membership of fifty or more and the golf club does not allow equal access to and full enjoyment of club facilities by all members of the club or the public, to the extent that the public is allowed, without discrimination on the basis of sex, subject to the following exceptions. Use for golf may be restricted on the basis of sex no more frequently than one, or part of one, weekend each month for each sex and no more than two, or part of two, weekdays each week for each sex. If a golf club allows use of the facilities by more than one adult per membership, the use must be equally available to all adults under the membership except for the restrictions mentioned above. Memberships that restrict play to certain times are allowed only if the times apply to all adults using the membership. The terms of a membership may provide that one spouse may have no right to use the golf course while the other spouse may have either limited or unlimited access to the course. Individual membership categories which entitle a member for a reduced rate to play during restricted hours may be created; however, the club must have a written request by the member for such a membership. Equal access to food or beverage facilities or services must be allowed for both men and women members.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2000.

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