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RESTRICT BLACKOUTS OF TELEVISED SPORTS BROADCASTS

House Bill 5884

Sponsor: Rep. Randy Richardville

Committee: Commerce

Complete to 9-16-02

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5884 AS INTRODUCED 4-11-02

The bill would create a new act that would, generally speaking, prohibit the "blackout" of a live broadcast within 75 miles of the event that was being broadcast based on attendance at the event, if the event was being held in a stadium or facility constructed or operated, in whole or in part, with public funds. The term "public funds" would include tax credits and abatements.

The prohibition would not apply, however, if the percentage of tickets not sold as of 72 hours before the event was greater than the percentage of public funds used in the total cost of construction or operation of the stadium or facility.

A violation of the act would be a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days or a fine of not more than \$25,000, or both. Under the bill, a violation would occur when a person denied another person's right to provide a live broadcast in the circumstances described earlier. The term "person" would mean an individual, corporation, partnership, association, or any other legal entity.

The bill specifies that it would only apply to an extension or a renegotiation of an existing contract or a new contract between the owners and organizers of a sports event and a television broadcaster, cable network, or satellite carrier.

House Bill 5884 (9-16-02)

Analyst: C. Couch

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