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Gambling Alert - January 18, 2023



Lottery 'lie': Why the gambling game may be a 'major problem' in America

While many people [play the lottery](#) with dreams of financial freedom and an escape from their current reality, one national expert is sounding the alarm about the practice, saying "predatory" gambling is America's "most neglected major problem."

Les Bernal is the national director of Stop Predatory Gambling, an organization headquartered in [Washington, D.C.](#)

"Through its advertising and marketing of lotteries, state governments have turned a nation of small earners — who could be small savers — into a nation of [habitual gamblers](#)," Bernal told Fox News Digital by email.

Bernal also said that over the next eight years, the American people will "lose more than \$1 trillion of personal wealth to commercialized gambling, at least half of which is being extracted by state lotteries."

He added, "If you could just cut that figure by 50%, there's no other policy reform that comes in 1,000 miles of that to make a bigger difference in the lives of everyday Americans."

‘Exploiting’ people’s ‘financial desperation’

Bernal offered specific examples of how lotteries prey on lower-income citizens.

He pointed out that there is a concentration of sales outlets in poorer communities, as well as messages on scratch tickets that "deceitfully declare" that playing is "your fastest way to a million dollars!"

One **Massachusetts 50-year-old** who regularly gives scratch tickets as gifts to people he doesn't know well, such as gifts for grab-bags, said that practice sometimes "leaves a twinge of guilt, to be honest."

He also said, "How do I know that the recipient isn't teetering on the edge of a gambling addiction? It's worth thinking about."

Bernal continued, "So if you're someone who just lost their job, or you're trying to pay your rent at the end of the month, or you need money to pay a large **medical bill**, state lotteries attempt to position themselves as the answer — exploiting the financial desperation of our fellow citizens."

"How do I know that the recipient isn't teetering on the edge of a gambling addiction?"

Many states are now selling \$50 scratch tickets — "and Texas sells \$100 scratch-off tickets" in low-income neighborhoods — "to citizens making a minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour," he said.

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