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Gambling Alert -October 28, 2022



State lotteries transfer wealth out of needy communities

WARREN, Mich. — While the growing expansion of casinos and state-sanctioned sports betting steal the spotlight, state lotteries have nearly doubled in size over the past two decades, driving a multibillion-dollar wealth transfer from low-income U.S. communities to powerful multinational companies.

A nationwide investigation of state lotteries by the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism at the University of Maryland found that stores that sell tickets are disproportionately clustered in lower-income communities in nearly every state. The investigation's analysis of cellphone location data shows that the people who patronize those lottery retailers come from the same kinds of communities.

Once rare, lotteries now operate in all but five U.S. states. Driven by more than a half-billion dollars in annual ad spending, increasingly sophisticated sales strategies and political pressure to increase revenue, lottery ticket sales have grown from \$47 billion to \$82 billion since 2005. In 10 states, lotteries generate more revenue than corporate income taxes.

The investigation also found that a key promise of lotteries across the country — that they support education — doesn't hold up. Instead, lotteries often compound inequities by

disproportionately benefiting college students and wealthier school districts far from the neighborhoods that fund ticket sales.

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