

PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING ON MARCH 8, 2016
TESTIMONY ON SB 360- AN ACT CONCERNING LOTTERY TICKETS
BRENDA TORRES

Chairman Larson, Chairman Dargan, and distinguished members of the committee, my name is Brenda Torres and I am here to testify in support of S.B. 360 An Act Concerning Lottery Tickets.

A few years back, I purchased a Lottery ticket and, to my surprise, I won! For as long as I had known, the time for turning in the ticket was one year. While I was in Puerto Rico visiting my family, in late September and early October, a new law went into effect that shortened the time to turn in the ticket, to six (6) months. When I got back, a friend said to me that she had seen something on the news about the new time period. I went immediately to turn in my ticket and was told I was a few days outside the new time period.

It seems to me that the fairest way to compensate anyone who buys a winning lottery ticket is to pay that person what they win. When an individual buys a lottery ticket and wins money, that money belongs to the winner not the lottery corporation or the State of Connecticut. That is why I believe no expiration date on lottery tickets is the fairest way to deal with anyone who partakes in the CT lottery. As is common knowledge, there are more losers than winners. If by some chance someone wins and does not cash in their ticket for some legitimate reason, that money should still belong to the person who took the chance and won.

I understand that the lottery corporation will disagree and I know in these tough economic times, some legislators will say the State cannot afford to lose revenue that the lottery receives from individuals who, for whatever reason, do not cash in their lottery tickets. The fact still remains that the money won on a lottery ticket belongs to the winner not the State of CT.

The State of CT, a few years ago, had the wisdom to eliminate expiration dates on gift cards. The argument was that if an individual purchased a gift card with their own money, then whoever is the recipient of that gift card has the right to purchase anything with the same cash value. The State should not get a windfall from the businesses where the gift card was bought. There is no difference from that scenario and the scenario of an expired lottery ticket. The State should not get a windfall from a person who buys a lottery ticket but fails submit that ticket within an allotted amount of time.

At the very least, should the legislature not accept the non-expiration of lottery tickets, someone who misses an expiration deadline should have the opportunity to plead their case to a Lottery Tribunal because there may be legitimate reasons for someone to not cash in their particular lottery ticket. There needs to be a second look in order to possibly recoup what that individual won in the first place. Since 1996, more than \$255.4 million have gone unclaimed and could have been rectified by a non-expiration date or an appeals process.

For the aforementioned reasons, I would ask the committee to support SB 360 An Act Concerning Lottery Tickets. I thank the members of this committee for the opportunity to testify.