

**STATEMENTS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION ON:**

**SENATE BILL 146, AN ACT AUTHORIZING SPORTS WAGERING, ONLINE CASINO GAMING, ONLINE LOTTERY AND ONLINE KENO &**

**HOUSE BILL 6038, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ANONYMOUS COLLECTION OF LOTTERY WINNINGS.**

**March 2, 2021**

The Freedom of Information (“FOI”) Commission offers the following comments on Senate Bill 146, An Act Authorizing Sports Wagering, Online Casino Gaming, Online Lottery and Online Keno, and House Bill 6038, An Act Concerning the Anonymous Collection of Lottery Winnings.

**Senate Bill 146**

Section 12 of Senate Bill 146 requires that the Connecticut Lottery Corporation establish a program to sell lottery tickets for lottery draw games through the corporation’s website, online service or mobile application. Among other requirements, the program must establish a voluntary self-exclusion process to allow a person to exclude himself or herself from establishing an online lottery account or purchasing a lottery ticket through such program. In addition, section 17 of Senate Bill 146 proposes to exempt from disclosure “[t]he name and any personally identifying information of a person who is participating or who has participated in the corporation's voluntary self-exclusion process.” The proposal, however, also allows the corporation to disclose “the name and any relevant records of such [participant], other than records of the participation of such person in the voluntary self-exclusion process, if such person claims a winning lottery ticket from the use of the online lottery program.”

The FOI Commission does not object to protecting information relating to an individual’s participation in the voluntary self-exclusion process, with limitation. In previous legislative sessions, the Commission worked with representatives of the Lottery Corporation to craft language that was narrow in its application. However, the language in section 12 of Senate Bill 146 is different from the language that we worked on in the past. As drafted, its scope is unclear and needs some clarification.

**House Bill 6038**

House Bill 6038 proposes to amend Conn. Gen. Stat. §12-810 “to allow a person who redeems a lottery ticket to claim a prize above a certain dollar amount to exempt his or her name and picture from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.”

The Commission questions the public policy behind such proposal. What public policy is served by providing confidentiality only to those who redeem a winning lottery prize worth a certain dollar amount?

There are reasons for disclosure of the names of winners who are voluntarily

participating in a lottery system offered by a quasi-public agency. Access to public information ensures that winnings are distributed fairly, and guards against wrongdoing in the system. Public information will likely keep abuse from being hidden.

For further information contact: Colleen M. Murphy, Executive Director and General Counsel or Mary Schwind, Managing Director and Associate General Counsel at (860) 566-5682.