



PRESS RELEASE

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Family Council Shocked at Proposal to Lower Lottery Scholarship Amounts

Family Council President Jerry Cox released a statement Thursday about a proposal by the Arkansas Lottery's Legislative Oversight Committee to lower scholarship amounts by 10%.

"This is just appalling," Cox said. "First we were all dazzled with promises that Arkansas' lottery was going to be the best and brightest in the nation, and that it was going to pave the way for all kids to go to college. Then we found out last summer that half the students who applied for scholarships weren't going to get any help at all from the lottery, and now they're saying that folks who do get help may not get as much as they were initially promised. It's just sad."

Cox went on to say, "The lottery exceeded expectations in its first year, and the Lottery Commission has been rolling out new lottery games left and right for months. The problem isn't a lack of money. The problem is that the Lottery Commission is only setting aside a paltry 22% of the money it makes selling lottery tickets for college scholarships. The rest is going to paychecks, advertising, overhead expenses, and prizes.

"If money is tight, why do scholarships have to be the first thing that gets cut? If the Game and Fish Commission were hurting, they would probably consider cutting their administrative costs before they would talk about shortening the hunting season or raising the price for a fishing license, because they understand they're job is to provide a service to the people of Arkansas. I'm not sure that's something the Lottery Commission understands."

Cox cited numerous other ways the Lottery Commission might cut costs while still maintaining its scholarships. "Arkansas' Lottery Director is one of the highest paid in the nation, at over \$300,000 per year, and there are other lottery officials who aren't far behind him on the pay scale. The Lottery pours all kinds of money into advertising—even though everyone living in Arkansas knows by now where they can go to buy lottery tickets, if they want to. They spent an enormous amount of money on lottery ticket vending machines last summer, and as far as we can tell, it never even crossed their minds that the money might have been better spent on Arkansas' students.

"We've said from Day One that this lottery wasn't going to turn out as promised. Even though we oppose the lottery, it's always appalling to see people disappointed when their government goes back on its promises."

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The Family Council is a conservative education and research organization based in Little Rock, Arkansas.