



PRESS RELEASE

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Legislative Oversight Committee Refuses to Weigh in On Lottery Machines

The Arkansas Lottery Commission's Legislative Oversight Committee refused to weigh in, this afternoon, on the decision to roll out 100 lottery ticket vending machines across Arkansas.

The committee's decision came on the heels of the Arkansas Lottery Commission's vote to move forward with the machines, despite intense public opposition.

Family Council President Jerry Cox was at this afternoon's committee meeting, and issued a statement saying, "The committee's decision not to weigh in on the machines is very disappointing. We had hoped the legislators on the committee would voice some of the same concerns their constituents did during the comment period a couple of weeks ago. They had a very real opportunity to speak up for Arkansans, and decided not to take it."

Cox also criticized the Arkansas Lottery Commission, saying, "The Arkansas Lottery Commission is trying to protect itself by telling everyone 'we're just trying to provide scholarships,' and that is leading some lawmakers to remain silent on some of the decisions the Commission is making because they don't want to be portrayed as 'anti-scholarship'. Just this week, however, the Associated Press released a news story stating that the poorest and least-educated regions of our state are purchasing the most lottery tickets. The Arkansas Lottery Commission needs to quit hiding behind students and scholarships, and address the fact that their so-called 'product' is ruining lives in parts of Arkansas."

Cox went on to say, "When someone talks about these vending machines leading to underage gambling and increases in gambling addiction, we need to take that seriously. These aren't just statistics and stories we're talking about. These are real people. They're our children, our neighbors, our family members, and our friends, and they're lives are slowly being ruined because the Arkansas Lottery Commission doesn't know how to exercise restraint. The Lottery Commission has been so blinded by the money that they aren't asking themselves whether or not the decisions they're making are ethical—and it shows."

Cox said today's committee meeting has not dissuaded him from pursuing legislation to ban lottery ticket vending machines in 2011. "There are 12 legislators on the Oversight Committee," Cox said, "but there are 135 in the Arkansas Legislature. I've already spoken with some legislators who would like to see the Arkansas Lottery Commission reined in, and I believe that's what's going to happen when the lawmakers come to Little Rock this January."

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

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