

Should Massachusetts Lottery Go Online?

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<http://www.necn.com/news/new-england/Should-Massachusetts-Lottery-Go-Online-399934561.html>

Video:

http://www.necn.com/on-air/as-seen-on/WEB-Audrey-Online-Gambling-5pm_NECN-399910281.html

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Sangeeta Jaggi has owned Lee's 2 Market on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston's Allston neighborhood for almost 13 years. Some of her obvious top sellers are lottery tickets and scratchers. But that may soon change.

Treasurer Deborah Goldberg filed a bill on Wednesday that would allow the lottery commission to offer games and sell products online and on mobile apps in Massachusetts.

"We've seen a real flattening in our profits and our sales and at a time it's tough finding resources for our communities, we feel it's our responsibility to make sure every community gets the funds they need," explained Goldberg.

Under the bill, the Lottery would have to verify online players are in Massachusetts and are over 18. It requires gamblers to set spending limits and doesn't allow players to pay with credit cards.

"You would need to go into a store to purchase a type of card that you would then be able to use at home," Goldberg added.

Many convenience store owners worry that if the bill passes, they would lose lottery commission. Jaggi is hopeful her business wouldn't be affected.

"Whoever wants to play the lottery, I think they'll want to play physically, so I think they will still come," said Jaggi.

Les Bernal with Stop Predatory Gambling worries the bill is not only damaging to gambling addicts. He believes it will affect everyone.

"You're paying for worse budget problems. It means higher taxes for less services as the state government continues to promote these more extreme forms of predatory gambling," Bernal told necn.

Lawmakers did not approve the idea in the last session. They are expected to take up Goldberg's bill in January.

"Whatever comes in the future, we don't know. So many things are going to change," said Jaggi.

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