Alabama Lottery Essay, Research Paper

The Alabama Lottery

The Alabama Lottery is a much-debated issue. The lottery is a proven historical income producing system. While we do not entertain a state lottery, our Alabama money flows to those states embracing one. Most states enjoying a lottery system fuel their educational programs from revenue created by their lottery. Alabama cannot afford to upgrade their current educational system, although rated among the worst in the nation. Many refute adoption of a state lottery because it is gambling yet embrace other forms such as bingo, or raffles. Gambling is a form of recreation and can provide psychological benefits usually overlooked. Alabama needs to adopt a lottery system to enhance the wealth of the state and fund our needed educational and state programs.

Taken from the Microsoft? Encarta? Encyclopedia 2000, an example of the benefits derived from lotteries is.

The Iceland, University of, university in Reykjav?k, Iceland. The university, called H?sk?li ?slands in Icelandic, was founded in the year 1000. . . In 1876 a medical school (Laeknask?li ?slands) was established. The law school of Iceland (Lagask?li ?slands) was established in 1908. These three schools merged into the University of Iceland on June 17, 1911. . . Until 1940 classes were held in the parliament buildings, but in that year a modern building was erected with funds generated through a national lottery.

The University of Iceland is a coeducational, public institution. No tuition is charged. It offers studies in theology, medicine, law, economics, philosophy, engineering, and science. The teaching staff numbers about 350 and student enrollment is about 3000. The library houses more than 160,000 volumes (University of Iceland).

According to, (Martha Simmons) of the Mobile Register, Alabama is currently ranked one of the worst states for quality education. ? Alabama earns its bottom-of-the-heap status by spending an average $3,814 per student per year, compared with $6,111 nationally.? Statically speaking, those states currently participating in the lotteries reap higher quality educational programs. Some states use up to 30 percent of the proceeds from the lottery to fund their educational systems, allowing in some cases free education (on line).

The lottery is an ancient, effective income-producing tool. History of the lottery and its effectiveness as quoted in the Microsoft? Encarta? Encyclopedia 2000.

?The lottery, a form of gambling that dates from ancient times, is used as a money-raising technique by religious groups, charities, and governments, including most states in the United States and most Canadian provinces. Gross revenue from state and local lotteries in the United States in 1990 exceeded $20 billion.?

In the 1990s Indiana?s generally strong economy generated record low unemployment figures and a large state surplus, considerably in excess of $1 billion. The state?s income was augmented by revenue from newly instituted venues for gambling (at racetracks and riverboat casinos) and a state lottery begun in the late 1980s (History, Indiana)

The lottery not only produces income, it is recreational and provides psychological benefits. Las Vegas, most popular of all states, known for gambling, residents enjoy no property taxes and low cost education. Las Vegas has capitalized on the entertainment value of gambling to the point of creating one of the largest cities in a desolate desert.

Dr. Felicia Campbell, an associate professor in the English Department at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, wrote,

But gambling is a fundamental human activity, which can serve a valuable function for both the individual and society. In the future, the positive aspects of gambling may be increasingly recognized; society may revise its view of the gambler and learn to use the gambling experience as effective therapy. Through gambling, many individuals can become more actively involved in life. Others can obtain needed psychological release from tension and drudgery. (qtd. In Frontline par.2)

A State lottery stimulates the economy. Many states enjoy prosperous growth because of the infusion of capitol from neighboring states as well as from winners. The Arizona lottery home page reports,

Last year, Arizona Lottery players won more than $133 million in prize money. At the same time, over $78 million was returned to communities statewide to fund projects from road improvements to puppet shows, nature to culture, hiking to biking. So the next time you play the Lottery, consider this. Even though you may not win the “big one” this time, you do always win. A total of 246 million dollars was collected from lotteries in Arizona in 1998. (par. 5)

This is an example of the potential revenue received by just one established lottery possessing state. How would Alabama best benefit from such a large amount of revenue applied to the educational system? Neighboring states enjoy the proceeds of Alabama residents who travel there strictly to play their lottery and support their economy.

Alabama lottery proposals are met with severe opposition. The lottery is considered an unacceptable form of gambling. A popular fund-raising activity of churches, schools, fraternal organizations, trade unions, and social clubs is the type of lottery known as a raffle. An article recently printed in the Mobile Register is an excellent example. ?Whether they’re raising money to take a trip, buy supplies or furnish a playground, it seems that today’s pupils sell just about everything. Sometimes the sales are in the form of a raffle, and other times in the form of direct purchases?. With neighboring states offering lottery games, religious beliefs targeting only one form of gambling does not prevent lottery purchases. Our failure to adopt our own state lottery actually promotes the welfare of our neighbors.

Our reluctance to sponsor our own state lottery effectively promotes spending in neighboring states. We do not stop people from playing the lottery. We simply make it slightly more inconvenient. We should implement our own lottery and utilize the proceeds to fund our educational commitments along with state funded programs. Current measures are pressing towards raising taxes, property, as well as sells, to support required programs. Proper utilization of funds could defer such opposed taxes and benefit the people. Alabama is one of the last States to embrace an income-producing lottery. We loose thousands each year and support our neighbors. It is past time, for us to realize our losses and establish a healthy, positive, income producing lottery system.