

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON THINK TWICE BEFORE GIFTING LOTTERY TICKETS TO CHILDREN

Hamilton, New Jersey, December 12, 2011 - The Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey has joined forces with the New Jersey Lottery to discourage the gifting of lottery tickets to minors. The Council and the Lottery continually work together to discourage underage gambling.

Lottery tickets are often popular stocking stuffers and easy choices to slip into a gift or holiday card. They are generally affordable, colorful and easily available. New Jersey law requires lottery purchasers to be 18 years of age. While the law does not prohibit adults from giving tickets to minors, research suggests this may not always be a good idea.

There is strong evidence suggesting that gambling at an early age increases the risk of developing a gambling problem. According to recent studies, 70-80 percent of adolescents report having gambled for money in the past year and approximately 30 percent report gambling on a weekly basis. Current problem gamblers report beginning gambling during childhood, often at ages 9-10.

The Council urges parents to use good judgment in making holiday gift selections for their children. Most youth first gamble with family members. This may contribute to normalization of gambling and a belief that gambling is harmless, unless parents send clear messages about responsible gambling. Donald Weinbaum, Executive Director of the Council, noted that, "While the Council is neutral on gambling, we are concerned that early introduction to any form of gambling can increase the potential for young people to develop gambling problems later in life."

There is a reason why New Jersey has established minimum ages for gambling activities. So this holiday season, if you choose to give a lottery ticket as a gift, be sure to consider the age of the recipient.

About The Council on Compulsive Gambling of NJ, Inc.

The Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, Inc. is a private non-profit organization that provides information, education and referral services for people affected by a gambling problem. The Council's mission is to educate the public to the fact that compulsive gambling is a treatable illness. The Council's 1-800-GAMBLER® Helpline and website www.800gambler.org have been resources for thousands of people who are compulsive gamblers and recovering from compulsive gambling, as well as their friends and families.

About the New Jersey Lottery

Since its inception in 1970, the New Jersey State Lottery www.state.nj.us/lottery has contributed over \$20 billion to State education and institutions. The New Jersey Lottery saved taxpayers over \$930 million in fiscal year 2011 by returning game proceeds to important educational programs and State-run facilities. More than six thousand businesses throughout the Garden State prosper from their partnership with the New Jersey Lottery. Among the Lottery's beneficiaries are: veterans homes, community and other colleges and universities, school nutrition programs, homes for the developmentally disabled, psychiatric hospitals, higher education scholarship programs and the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf.

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