

Senate committee considers bill to abolish Texas Lottery

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The [Texas Senate Committee on State Affairs](#) heard public testimony May 5 on a bill calling for the Texas Lottery to be abolished.



In presenting his bill to abolish the Texas Lottery to the Senate Committee on State Affairs, Sen. Bob Hall laid out a detailed recounting of how the Texas Lottery Commission in recent years failed to abide by state laws. (Screen capture image)

“There is no way to reorganize, restructure or restore the integrity of the government-run Texas Lottery,” said Sen. Bob Hall, R-Edgewood, who introduced [SB 1988](#). Hall’s bill calls for the abolition of the Texas Lottery, effective Jan. 1, 2026.

In presenting his bill—which the Senate Committee on State Affairs left pending—Hall laid out a detailed recounting of how the Texas Lottery Commission in recent years failed to abide by state laws.

Without legislative approval, the commission changed rules to enable “a private/public syndicated crime partnership” to “engage in a criminal conspiracy to defraud Texans,” he asserted.

‘Serious breach of trust’

“I and those who know the details even as they continue to evolve are convinced that this organized crime scandal that has been operating behind the shield of being a Texas state government agency is probably the most serious breach of trust since the Sharpstown scandal in 1971 and 1972,” Hall told the committee.

The [Sharpstown scandal](#) Hall referred to was a stock-fraud scandal that resulted in charges being brought against nearly two dozen state officials and former officials.

Among other abuses, Hall described how the Texas Lottery Commission enabled out-of-state investors to purchase practically every combination of numbers to [rig the lottery](#) to win a \$95 million jackpot.

“Multiple investigations into the lottery’s criminal operations are ongoing and evidence of multiple crimes against the people of Texas continue to be uncovered,” Hall said.

In response to a question about how much the lottery contributes to public education, Hall noted it funds three days of public-school operations in the calendar year, which he characterized as “chump change.”

Lottery is ‘the antithesis of Texas values’

Rob Kohler, consultant with Texas Baptists’ Christian Life Commission,

testified in favor of SB 1988.



Rob Kohler, consultant with Texas Baptists' Christian Life Commission, testified in favor of SB 1988, which would abolish the Texas Lottery. (Screen capture image)

When Texas approved the creation of a state lottery in the early 1990s, proponents presented it as a voluntary alternative to a regressive sales tax, Kohler noted.

The lottery “would make a sales tax blush in terms of regressivity,” he asserted.

Kohler presented data demonstrating the correlation between areas where incomes are low and purchases of “immediate gratification” scratch-off ticket sales are high.

“They’re selling \$100 scratch-off tickets now in convenience stores. They’ve gone from the price of a Snickers bar at a dollar to the most expensive product in the store,” Kohler said.

John Litzler, public policy director for the Christian Life Commission, also testified in support of SB 1988.

Texas Baptist churches are “on the front lines” of helping people who suffer due to financial crises “caused at least in part by the Texas Lottery,” he noted.

He called the Texas Lottery “the antithesis of Texas values” and said the time has come for the Texas Lottery Commission to be abolished.

“We support legislation that promotes both fair and just financial practices and legislation that promotes human flourishing in Texas,” Litzler said. “We believe this bill does both of those things and that the Texas Lottery games don’t do either of those things.”