

How Readers Voted on

LEGALIZED LOTTERIES

*The first Family Weekly Special Poll resulted
in a landslide, with ballots running more than 2 to 1
in favor of state-operated sweepstakes!*

By JERRY KLEIN

HERE'S ONE sure bet: if the readers of FAMILY WEEKLY had their way, state governments would soon be operating legal lotteries.

On August 25, this magazine published the article, "Legalized Lotteries—Good or Bad?" It described how New Hampshire earlier this year had enacted a law to set up a state sweepstakes. Accompanying the article was a ballot through which readers from coast to coast could vote on the controversial question of whether legalized lotteries should be authorized as an alternative to increased state or local taxes.

The result of the poll was a landslide! More than 72 percent of FAMILY WEEKLY readers who voted said they were in favor of such state-operated lotteries.

The tally: 3,963 in favor, 1,506 opposed.

The votes poured in from all sections of the country, but an extraordinary number came from the West and Southwest. Many citizens in those areas made clear their resentment that nearby Nevada's state-sanctioned gambling siphons off money that otherwise might find good use in the voters' home states.

The comments expressed by voters on both sides of the question reflected a deep and genuine concern about the issue and its various aspects: political, financial, moral, and social.

To sum up some of the arguments of the pro-lottery majority: a state-operated lottery would provide a rich source of funds for schools and social-welfare programs without adding to the

present tax load; state operation would insure proper controls over gambling and curb the intrusion of "gangster" elements; legal gambling would give state governments millions of dollars now wagered abroad, particularly in Mexico and in the Irish Sweepstakes.

"It seems to be a painless way of paying taxes," said John Welch of Tulelak, Calif. He also noted: "A person isn't forced to join in *playing* as (he is) in paying . . ."

Legalized lotteries "would cut out racketeers and benefit all the people within the state," according to a Trenton, N. J., man who added: "I think the question should be put before the public to vote on."

A Reno, Nev., woman wrote: "Gambling has always been part of civilization and always will be. It hasn't hurt our state but has provided a living for many people and supported schools, colleges, and churches. Besides, it's more fun than taxes!"

J. F. Hess, a justice of the peace in Salisbury, N. C., put it this way: "The public will gamble one way or another. Give 'em what they want and let 'em live normally . . . yes, let's have it, the sooner the better."

All of life is a risk, many voters declared by way of asserting that gambling isn't inherently evil. "If people find it morally wrong, then they must also object to raising funds by means of tobacco, alcohol, and racing taxes," said a man in Villa Grove, Ill.

Many of those voting in favor of state lotteries recognized that the issue has ethical over-

tones. They contended, however, that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with a government making it legally possible to bet—provided the individual is free to decide whether it would be wrong for him to participate.

"You are not compelled to buy lottery tickets," said Leonard L. Wickland, Jr., of Wenatchee, Wash. "If it is against your moral principles, don't participate."

The question of betting being immoral was described as "nonsense" by Carl G. Suosso, of Manchester, N. H. "I've never been to a race track," he added, "but I'll buy a lottery ticket."

"There is no moral issue here," declared a man in Franklin Park, N. J. And across the country he was echoed by a woman in Carmel, Calif., who felt that "the moral issue is not significantly involved."

On the opposite side of the issue are the many Americans who feel that encouraging gambling would be a serious mistake. Here are the principal reasons they gave:

It is morally wrong; it weakens character and leads to other forms of wrongdoing; its political and social cost would override the taxes it might yield; it is no real answer to the basic need of cutting the cost of government.

"The end does not justify the means," declared a Canton, Ohio, minister, the Rev. Gordon H. Roloff. "A legalized lottery is basically a moral crime . . . it corrupts society and government."

Several residents of New Hampshire itself went on the record in FAMILY WEEKLY's poll as being opposed to their state's newly adopted lottery. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. H. Witcomb of Hampton, N. H., who called the idea "a shabby hoax" that would increase "public apathy" and worsen the crime rate.

According to J. Lewis Schanbacher of Kokomo, Ind., a state lottery would: "1. increase poverty; 2. produce revenue from those least able to pay; 3. destroy thrift and impair savings; 4. stimulate other forms of gambling; 5. put government in extra-jurisdictional function; 6. tempt politicians to use it as a political tool . . ."

SOME OF THE most touching comments came from readers whose own childhood had been embittered by gambling. "We needed the money for food," a Corona del Mar, Calif., man recalled sadly. "My father's gambling ruined our lives and eventually broke up our home," wrote a woman in Waterloo, Iowa.

Mrs. Glen Tinkle of Marion, Ind., said, "Tax money that might be gained could never repay the loss in happiness that lotteries cause."

"America was not built on easy chances, but by hard work with just compensation," declared Arthur H. Falter of Niagara Falls, N. Y. "To give the stamp of legitimacy to gambling would be to drive yet another nail into the coffin of all that has made our country great."

Roy Mayhew of Bowling Green, Ky., said, "The seeking of the easy buck must be decreased in our society, not enlarged."

And, finally, Dr. and Mrs. Alan Benner of Claremont, Calif., suggested: "It is better to lower taxes by the honest, responsible application of tax monies than to rely on gambling to cover up luxurious pork barreling and dishonest manipulation of public funds."

"Let's fight for decent, careful expenditure instead of crooked gambling."