



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CA Lottery Statement on Conviction of Serial Scratchers® Thief in Widespread, Organized Retail Crime Ring**

**SACRAMENTO** – Following the guilty plea and conviction of serial Scratchers theft ringleader Ryan Anderson in Contra Costa County court this morning, the California Lottery releases the following statement:

*Mr. Anderson and his fellow thieves stole tens of thousands of dollars' worth of Lottery merchandise across seven counties in dozens of theft incidents carried out among Lottery's retail partner businesses.*

*The Lottery was created by California voters nearly 40 years ago to generate much-needed supplemental funding for public education in our great state – public schools, kindergarten through college and the university level. The programs and services our dollars help fund may not otherwise exist without the Lottery, and as such, public school students across California are among the victims who have been harmed because of Mr. Anderson's poor decisions and criminal activity.*

*These acts victimize the California Lottery in myriad ways. Our partners, our players, and our beneficiaries are all seriously harmed by these criminal actions.*

*The California Lottery relies on more than 23,000 retail partners to sell Lottery games to the public; these businesses are at the core of Lottery operations, and without them, the Lottery would not be able to generate the school funding voters rely on the organization to do.*

*As a result of these thefts, dozens of retail businesses lost out not only on product they'd already paid for – the tickets themselves – but also on commissions and potential bonuses related to the sale of those games. Many of Lottery's retail partners are small, independently owned businesses that rely on the sale of Lottery games to thrive.*

*Further, Mr. Anderson and his co-criminals stole tickets they were able to cash in for prize money that other players should have won, players who buy Lottery games with the hope of winning extra cash for themselves and their families. Denying lawful players an opportunity to win does direct harm to the Lottery's reputation.*

*Lastly, the Lottery has supported this criminal case in the form of resources and law enforcement personnel hours devoted to helping with the investigation. Those resources, I think we can all agree, would be better serving the people of California in other ways – ways that allow the California Lottery to*

*maximize its ability to raise money for schools, the singular mission around which the entire organization operates.*

*As you have heard, there are countless victims in today's case – not just the California Lottery itself. I'm referring to players, retail businesses, and most notably, public school students who have been robbed of additional funds to support important programs and enriching learning environments.*

*It is these victims we hope Mr. Anderson and others consider in the future, hopefully preventing them from making such poor decisions again that cause such harm to the people of California.*

Anderson plead guilty to nine felony charges related to a widespread, organized retail crime ring across Northern California, during which more than \$100,000 worth of California Lottery *Scratchers* were taken, along with nearly \$50,000 in cashed prizes associated with the stolen tickets. Anderson now faces three years in prison as well as restitution for his crimes.

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*The California Lottery's mission is to provide supplemental funding to California public schools, including kindergarten and grades 1-12, community colleges, the California State University, the University of California, and other California public educational entities. The funds the Lottery transferred to public education totaled approximately \$2 billion for fiscal year 2021-22, which amounted to a modest percentage of education's overall budget. However, this funding is largely discretionary, meaning schools can use this for important, yet unfunded instructional programs they would otherwise not afford. During the same period, the Lottery generated more than \$8.8 billion in sales, more than 95% of which went back to the community in the form of prize payments, retailer commissions and bonuses, and contributions to education. If you feel you have a gambling problem or know someone who does, you can get free confidential help by calling the California Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER.*

[www.calottery.com](http://www.calottery.com)