



**League of Women Voters
New Hampshire
4 Park St., Suite 200
Concord NH**

February 15, 2015

Re: **HB 594** Establishing Keno

To Chairman Major and members of the NH House Ways and Means Committee

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony opposing HB 594. The League of Women Voters New Hampshire opposes funding government with revenue from expanded gambling.

The optimum tax is one that provides a reliable source of revenue, raises adequate revenue to justify its imposition, is based on ability to pay, and is levied on a broad segment of the population. The League supports, where appropriate, a tax that is a direct payment for a service or benefit ("user's tax").

The League opposes expansion of gambling as a source of revenue in part because it meets none of the criteria above.

Our reasons for opposing HB 594 are below:

- This bill would legalize electronic keno slot machines in unlimited numbers in or near every town and city in our state.

- Keno is falsely described as an innocuous additional lottery game. In fact, electronic keno slots allow continuous real-time machine gambling with wager results once each four minutes. Gamblers can and do wipe out paychecks and family food budgets in one evening in keno bars, which would be located within a few minutes' drive of almost every New Hampshire household.

- Keno bets would be made at video gambling machines located at convenience stores, gas stations, bars, restaurants, and charity gambling establishments. Like slots, keno is far more seductive and addictive than any form of gambling we now have in NH. The speed of play and the frequency of "almost winning" cause an adrenal rush to place just one more bet...repeatedly.

Massachusetts was forced to legalize Internet Keno (Keno To Go) in 2008 because addicted keno gamblers were clogging convenience store check-out lines and standing zoned out watching screens for the next set of winning numbers. With Internet Keno, bets are placed at stores and results are checked online or via mobile devices. Up to 30 bets wagering hundreds of dollars can be played at one time. This is not something we see as improving NH's quality of life.

The League of Women Voters NH supports an ITL decision by the House Ways and Means Committee on HB 594.

Sincerely,

Liz Tentarelli and Sally Davis, Co-presidents

League of Women Voters New Hampshire