



Vermont Lottery Video Gambling Machines Predetermine Winners

The Vermont State Lottery currently has 25 video gambling machines (Touch Play) in bars throughout the state as part of a pilot project. Proposed legislation (s.252) would formally approve and greatly expand the number of these gambling machines.

These machines give the illusion of player-skill by allowing the user to press buttons on a screen after play commences. However, as noted by the Vermont State Lottery's director and the machine's manufacturer the player's skill has no role in the outcome. The outcome is predetermined. Once the player begins a game, the machine determines whether the player has won or lost. The player is then put through the charade of pressing buttons (some of which resemble games of skill—see image above) before the outcome is “revealed.”

We feel the cynical nature of these machines may be one more reason for us to consider carefully before approving S.252. We may want to have a thoughtful public conversation before we legalize video gambling machines.

The Vermont State Lottery on Predetermination: In his testimony of April 6, 2016 in front of the House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs, Vermont State Lottery Director, Greg Smith, stated that: Yes, outcomes on touch play consoles are predetermined ... they are just like scratch tickets where the outcome is predetermined, but instead of scratching, the result is revealed on the screen as the buttons are pushed...

Mr. Smith's testimony is corroborated by the manufacturer of the Touch Play machine, “A winning predetermined outcome begins at the starting point and is concealed from a player prior to completion play of the lottery game.” And “the player watches the game unfold on the video screen...each game has a predetermined outcome drawn from an offsite finite pool.”

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