



The Charleston Regional  
**Chamber of Commerce**

## **ISSUE: MODERNIZING THE WEST VIRGINIA LOTTERY**

### **BACKGROUND**

A total of 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands offer lotteries. West Virginia has had a sustainable lottery program in place since the 1980's. According to the West Virginia Lottery website, since 1986, \$9 billion has been generated from the West Virginia Lottery which is dispersed for schools and education, senior citizens, tourism and state parks. WV Lottery revenues now exceed \$1.1 billion annually on average.

As the globe becomes more digital so must all businesses and governments. Many states now offer online lottery ticket sales. In the states that currently offer online lottery ticket sales, it has been a profitable venture. Illinois, which has had an online lottery ticket sale system in place since 2012 and limits online purchases to \$150 a day, has grossed roughly \$50 million since its launch. Meanwhile, Georgia has expanded its offering of lottery games available to purchase online and has generated over \$7 million in sales.

As the 2020 state legislative sessions begin, many states may begin to explore the market of offering sales of lottery tickets online. Offering online lottery ticket sales makes sense as a way to generate additional revenue for states that are starved for cash and looking for additional ways to cover budget shortfalls. We are likely to see more states exploring online video sales in the upcoming year.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

While the Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce, in general, believes that a state's budget should not be "balanced" by or dependent on lottery revenues, the lottery was authorized by the citizens of West Virginia in 1986. The question is not "whether to have" a lottery. The question before our lottery, as a state agency, is to change with the times or be left behind. The Chamber supports a responsible review and implementation of online lottery sales in accordance with the laws of the State of West Virginia.