

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

CHAIRPERSON JAMES:

24

Jeffrey Tufts?

1 MR. TUFTS: Thank you.

2 I would like to thank the Commission for
3 the opportunity to testify before you today. I would
4 also like to welcome you to the Commonwealth this
5 afternoon and I certainly hope you can take time to
6 enjoy the city on this special holiday.

7 My name is Jeffrey Tufts, I am the Chairman
8 of the Easton Board of Selectman, which is the
9 executive body in our town. Easton has a population of
10 22,000 and is centered in a triangle between Boston,
11 Providence and Cape Cod. Our community has seen
12 substantial residential growth over the past 10 to 15
13 years, which in turn has resulted in the need for
14 increased services.

15 I'd like to give the Commission an example
16 of what the Massachusetts Lottery effect is on our
17 community. The Town of Easton receives revenue the
18 following way. One, we have our local revenues, which
19 are provided by property tax, excise tax and local
20 fees. Property tax and excise tax are capped by a
21 ballot question at 2« percent annual increase. And we
22 have state aid, we have general aid that is based on a
23 statewide formula.

1 We have education allotments, which is the
2 Education Reform Law, which mandates per pupil expenses
3 statewide. In Easton's case, approximately 75 percent
4 of our education costs are funded by the state, the
5 remaining amount must be funded by the local revenue.

6 The last piece is the Lottery aid. Local
7 officials are pretty much hamstrung by the formulas and
8 mandatory funding needs. Local fees and Lottery aid
9 work are the safety net for local government. Last
10 year Easton received \$1.5 million in Lottery aid,
11 approximately five percent of our entire budget.

12 As mentioned before, mandatory spending
13 matched with dedicated revenues determine most of our
14 budget decisions. In Easton, we obviously fund our
15 mandatory expenditures first, and then allocate the
16 remaining funds to cover the most pressing needs.
17 During budget formulation, Easton conservatively level
18 funds Lottery aid, any increase in the aid is used to
19 cover unexpected needs. Last year it increased \$294
20 thousand.

21 The past few years the increase in Lottery
22 aid has been used to cover unexpected tuition costs for
23 new special needs children, cover the unanticipated
24 costs of snow removal, or fund building safety repairs.

1 In prior years, when the economy was not as strong,
2 Lottery aid was the difference in keeping a police
3 officer on each shift or how many fire stations were
4 staffed 24 hours.

5 As an optional revenue stream I
6 wholeheartedly endorse the Lottery. Easton has taken a
7 very conservative approach to budgeting, trying to
8 protect ourselves from economic changes, or shifts in
9 our revenue stream. Even with that said we have come
10 to depend on the Lottery to fund a large portion of our
11 budget. The amount of aid Easton receives could be
12 matched to the entire cost of our entire fire and
13 ambulance department or the entire DPW budget.

14 Easton doesn't suffer from any side effects
15 from the Lottery, Easton has a few convenience stores
16 and some taverns that offer Keno, but the anticipated
17 mob scenes have not developed. The only attribute of
18 the Lottery that Easton residents feel is the
19 occasional checkout delay at convenience stores while
20 the person in front of you is picking their ticket.

21 I would like to thank you for allowing me
22 to come before you today and I would be happy to expand
23 on my remarks if necessary.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very much.