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ILLINOIS LOTTERY SUED OVER UNPAID PRIZES DUE TO BUDGET CRISIS

A class-action lawsuit has been filed against the Illinois Lottery on behalf of more than two dozen recent lottery winners who are owed a combined \$288 million.



By Eric Horng

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CHICAGO (WLS) -- A class-action lawsuit has been filed against the Illinois Lottery on behalf of more than two dozen recent lottery winners who are owed a combined \$288 million. Their winnings have [not been paid because of the state budget impasse](#).

"I feel like my balloon was kind of deflated, if you want to put it that way. I don't feel like it's fair. I never had real good luck, but this really, this kind of makes me feel like my bad luck is back," said Rhonda Rasche, a plaintiff from Homer Glen.

Rasche said she won \$50,000 on a scratch-off ticket on July

29 and has yet to see a dime. The lawsuit comes after lottery officials announced last month that until a state budget is in place, any jackpot totaling more than \$25,000 cannot be paid out because the state comptroller does not have the legal authority to cut those checks.

On Wednesday, Illinois Comptroller Leslie Munger said her hands are tied.

"Those are not court-ordered payments, they don't fall under continuing appropriation. Just like the expenses, the costs for higher education, MAP grants, etc., they are all going to have to wait in line until we get a budget. So rather than filing a court order, perhaps they should call their legislator and ask them to work on getting a budget in place," Munger said.

"They've known since July 1st that they're not going to pay, and that's a fraud. And we want that stopped if they're not going to pay. They should not be able to continue to sell the tickets," said Thomas Zimmerman, Jr., plaintiffs' attorney.

The plaintiffs said they want interest on their winnings because the lottery is currently making interest on the money they're withholding. Lottery jackpots of \$25,000 and less are being paid at this time.

In a statement, the Illinois Lottery said it couldn't comment on the lawsuit because it hasn't yet received the complaint.