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Lottery winners don't know when they'll get paid

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CHICAGO (WBBM/CNN) - Lottery winners in Illinois are having to wait before they cash in their big checks because of the state budget impasse.

Rhonda Rasche is still waiting, but not holding her breath, for her \$50,000 in winnings.

"I bought the ticket, and I won," Rasche said. "They're not coming through with their part of the deal. I don't feel like a winner at all. It's probably one of the worst things I've been through, next to the death of my father."

Since July, the state hasn't paid players who've won \$25,000 or more. More recently, they decided not to pay any winnings more than \$600.

"We are out of money now. Illinois literally does not have another dollar to spend," Illinois Comptroller Leslie Munger said.

Tom Zimmerman is representing dozens of winners suing the state. He said thousands more could be added to the legal fight.

"We don't know if these people will ever get paid," Zimmerman said. "The Illinois lottery fund has on deposit, the last time we looked, \$244 million to pay lottery winners."

The state said once a budget is passed, they will pay out all of the claims. But there is no estimate on when a budget will pass.

Businesses owners also feel the effects. One man said this could mean a 25 percent loss.

"We're going to lose the business, too, because people are not going to buy," Yogi Dalal said.

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Illinois has hundreds of millions in its lottery fund, according to one lawyer, but the state won't pay winners until it passes a budget.

(Source: WBBM/CNN)