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Legislation to Shield Lottery Winners' Privacy

Madison, WI – In a significant move to protect the privacy of Wisconsin lottery winners, State Representative William Penterman (R-Columbus) circulated a bill to safeguard the identity of lottery prize winners of \$1,000,000 or more.

The bill, LRB-4130, prohibits retailers who sold a lottery ticket, the administrator of the state lottery, and the Department of Revenue from disclosing the name, address, or social security number of a lottery prize winner if the winner requests confidentiality. This protection extends for up to one year after the winner becomes entitled to the lottery prize, providing winners with a crucial period of privacy following their windfall.

Key provisions of the bill include:

- **Confidentiality Request Procedure:** The bill outlines a procedure for winners of lottery prizes equal to or greater than \$1,000,000 to request confidentiality for up to one year after becoming entitled to the prize.
- **Limited Exceptions for Disclosure:** The bill specifies instances where disclosure is allowed for tax purposes, determining delinquency in tax payment or court-ordered child support, and assessing withholding for child, spousal, or family support.
- **Exemption from Public Records Law:** The bill shields written records containing the name, address, or social security number of confidential winners from public records requests under s. 19.35 for up to one year after the winner becomes entitled to the lottery prize.

State Representative William Penterman (R-Columbus) expressed enthusiasm for the bill, stating, "This legislation strikes a balance between transparency and an individual's right to privacy. Lottery winners should be able to enjoy their newfound wealth without intrusion into their personal lives. This bill ensures that winners have the necessary time to adjust and plan for the future without the immediate public spotlight."

As Wisconsin progresses toward adopting this legislation, it joins a growing number of states recognizing the importance of protecting the privacy of lottery winners, fostering a more supportive environment for those who experience the life-altering event of winning a significant lottery prize.

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