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# POWERBALL TICKET SHARING BECOMES VIRAL FACEBOOK CRAZE AS \$1.5 BILLION DRAWING NEARS

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The \$1.5 billion Powerball drawing Wednesday night is past the viral stage, as a full-blown epidemic of lottery ticket fever has overtaken the United States.

Are some individuals actually willing to share their potential fortune with strangers they've never met? The answer is a resounding yes, as a new Facebook phenomenon of sharing the \$1.5 billion Powerball winnings from a ticket has taken off in the past week.

While there's no way to find the first Facebook user offering to share their chances at winning the Powerball drawing, Jake Dieterich tendered a note to accompany his ticket in a photograph for the Saturday drawing worth

approximately \$950 million. Dieterich's Facebook image went viral, producing more than 280,000 likes and generating more than 132,000 comments in a short period.

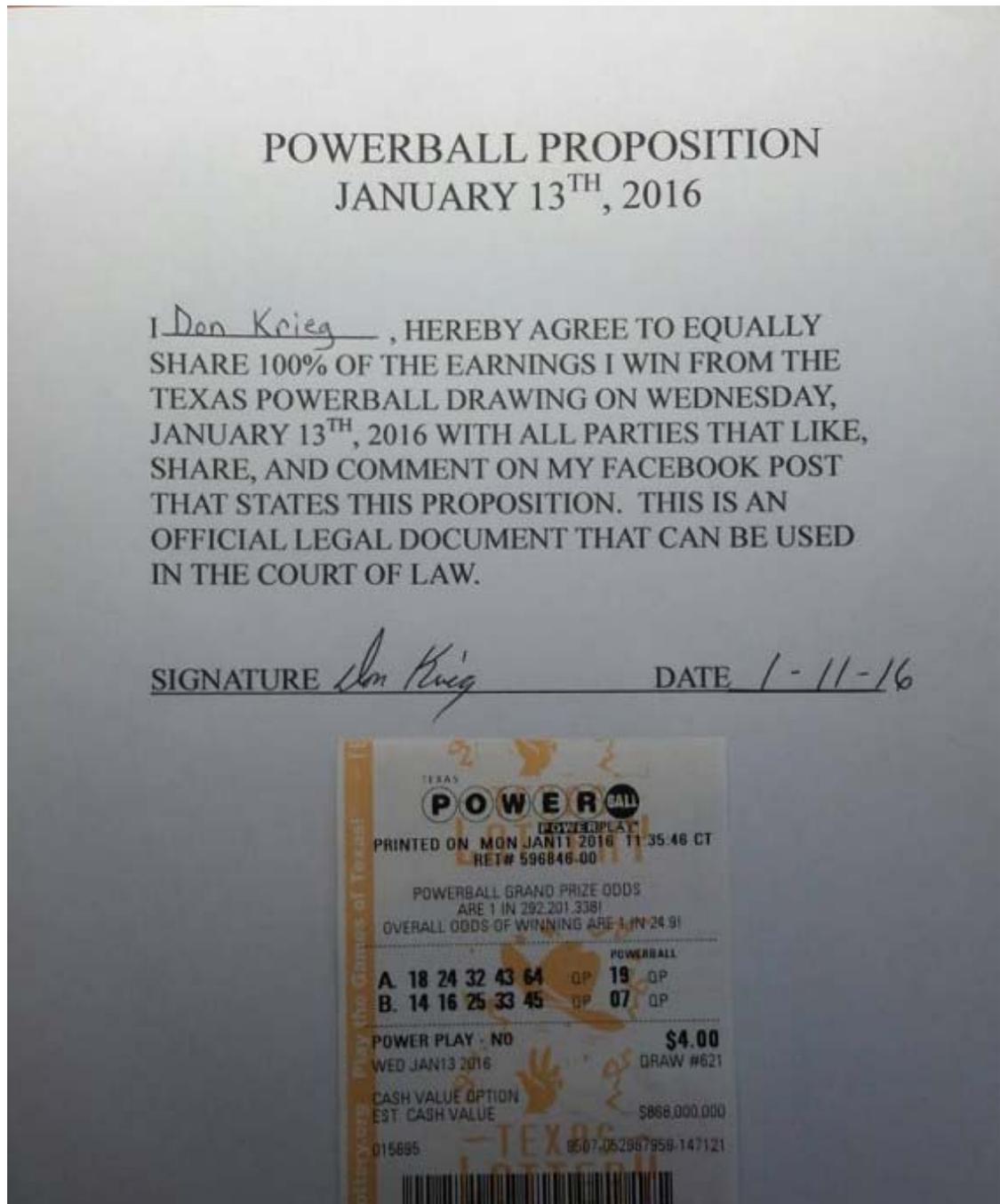


Facebook user Jake Dieterich agreed to share his earnings with others in the \$950 million Powerball drawing Saturday. His ticket did not win, however. [Photo via Jake Dieterich/Facebook]

As the Powerball pot has grown, so too has the Facebook copy cats. With more than 512,000 likes and 120,000 shares, Facebook user Don Krieg has

turned his earnest offering to “share 100% of the earnings” into a viral Internet sensation. More than 323,000 users have commented on the image, many wishing the ticket holder and their fellow Facebook users good luck.

With more than half of a million users vying for a piece of Krieg’s potential winnings, how much money would that mean for each individual Facebook user? One website breaks down the amount of money an **individual would pocket** from either the annuity or lump sum settlement by each state, showing that Texas (Krieg’s home state) is one of a handful of locations where there are no state taxes due.



With a lump sum worth \$697 million after federal taxes, individuals betting on Krieg's ticket to win the \$1.5 billion Powerball drawing would earn approximately \$1,361 for each Facebook user. The amount could decrease depending on how taxes for gifts and even attorney fees would play into the scenario.

Individuals may wonder if the promise made via the viral Facebook photographs is binding. *Forbes* writer Robert Wood – a tax and litigation specialist – **penned an article** suggesting it is if the winner of the \$1.5 billion Powerball drawing posts a photograph of the ticket and agrees to share the winnings.

Wood writes that past lottery winners have been sued in court and lost. The author cites a 20-year-old verbal agreement as an example of a past lottery winner losing in court as the court upheld a pact made more than two decades ago.

A viral infographic from *Business Insider* explains why the chance of winning the \$1.5 billion Powerball drawing is 292,201,338, and **how much money** could be made by buying a ticket with every possible number combination. Indeed, an entity that purchases every possible number combination after the expense of purchasing the tickets would net \$439 million.

While the winner of accomplishing this feat could net nearly half of a billion dollars, the reality that another individual sharing those same winning numbers could wipe away any gains this strategy could make. That's in addition to finding the time and the \$584 million dollars necessary to buy every ticket combination before Wednesday's drawing.

New advice from *The New York Times*'s writer Josh Barro suggests the winner of the \$1.5 billion Powerball jackpot should **take the annuity** over the lump sum. His reasoning is sound as there are tax advantages for the person holding the winning ticket to accept a structured payment method – and the

full amount – over the estimated one-time payment of \$930 million as a lump sum.

Another reason Barro notes the winner should take smaller payments over 30 years is that the likelihood of blowing all of the money decreases. That's especially true considering the holder of the \$1.5 billion Powerball ticket will be bombarded by long lost acquaintances and family members looking to beg, borrow, or swindle it from the winner.

What do you think about the viral Facebook sharing of Powerball tickets with others? Leave your thoughts in the comment section below.

[Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images]