



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 28, 2023

HB 697

Department of Human Services - Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards - Fraud (Prevent Electronic Benefits Theft Act of 2023)

House Appropriations Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 697 would require the Department of Human Services to reimburse a beneficiary for any benefits lost due to the fraudulent use of the beneficiary's Electronic Benefits Transfer card and require the State to give preference to certain vendors in the procurement process for electronic benefits distribution or administration; requiring the Department to establish a certain point of contact for investigating and identifying electronic benefits fraud.

Recently, social safety net fraud has skyrocketed within Maryland leaving our most vulnerable populations in need. The Conference strongly supports safeguards for poverty-reducing programs that protect vulnerable Marylanders. Senate Bill 697 seeks to support those who struggle to make ends meet by reimbursing stolen benefits to our most vulnerable populations in Maryland.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a **favorable** report on House Bill 697.