

**House Appropriations Committee  
February 28, 2023**

**House Bill 697: Department of Human Services - Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards –  
Theft and Restoration of Benefits**

**\*\*\*SUPPORT\*\*\***

National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) requests your support of HB 697 which will require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to replace benefits within two days of report of theft to victims, provides a clear dispute resolution process when they disagree with DHS's determination on reimbursement, and places affirmative responsibilities on DHS to reduce and prevent future theft of benefits.

NASW is the largest national organization of social workers representing over 120,000 social workers and over 16,000 of those are licensed here in the state of Maryland. The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

This bill will help Marylanders who have been victims of fraud and will help in the investigating and reimbursing any benefits that have been lost. We know that an Electronic Benefits Transfer card helps in providing for food and financial assistance to our most vulnerable citizens here in Maryland on a daily basis. Social Workers work every day with many citizens who rely heavily on this card for their benefits. Social workers have been and will continue to be on the forefront of these efforts. Social workers are trained to be sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and are committed to ending discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice particularly with displaced populations.

NASW-MD urges you to support HB 697. Thank you for all you do to reach a stronger Maryland!

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