



**HB697 Department of Human Services – Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards – Theft  
and Restoration of Benefits  
Appropriations Committee  
February 28, 2023**

**Position:** Favorable

**Background:** HB697 would establish a framework for the State to reimburse stolen benefits and better secure EBT accounts against fraud.

**Comments:** The Maryland Retailers Association (MRA) is in strong support of the restoration of food benefits funds to Marylanders who have been victims of fraud and theft. We became aware of problems with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds in 2022 and reached out to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to determine the source of the issues. It soon became apparent that Maryland was experiencing one of the highest rates of SNAP theft in the country.

The use of skimmers to commit identity theft impacts all shoppers, and the retail industry is working to address this widespread issue. The average customer whose personal debit or credit card is skimmed, cloned, or otherwise stolen is able to seek reimbursement from their banking institution. This, unfortunately, is not the case for SNAP beneficiaries, who depend on their benefits to be able to pay bills and feed their families. Households receiving SNAP benefits should be treated like any other consumer when they experience fraud and theft, and MRA supports the reimbursement of stolen benefits funds.

We have received questions from members about the use of chipped Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards and are continuing to collect feedback and information from members and national partners. We have shared some questions with DHS and look forward to working with the Department, sponsors, and stakeholders on that aspect of the legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.