



HB 1434 - Department of Human Services - Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards - Restoration of Benefits
Finance Committee
March 21, 2024
OPPOSE

Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in respectful opposition to House Bill 1434. HB 1434 would change Marylander's right to receive reimbursement from EBT theft.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

In 2023, advocates, the Moore-Miller administration, and legislators worked together to pass [HB 502/SB 2](#) to address the rising amounts of EBT theft. This legislation was a collaboration between stakeholders that resulted in DHS reimbursing millions of stolen funds to Maryland families.

EBT thefts are still a nationwide concern and many states, including Maryland, are implementing measure to lessen the security risk. EBT recipients' information is stolen like how debit and credit card information is stolen- through skimming devices placed on ATMs or card-swiping machines. Certain security measures that are specific to "skimming", like having chip cards, have not been implemented yet. This means that Marylanders are still at risk of having their financial assistance funds stolen.

CASH appreciates Delegate Lewis's dedication to meet with advocates and understand our concerns. She has been willing to have many conversations, and we know she is committed to finding the best solution. We believe that an unfavorable report will give us more time to work with Delegate Lewis over the interim and have a strong solution that protects Marylanders.

CASH hosted monthly DHS meetings in 2023 where advocates had a chance to connect with leadership in DHS. This partnership resulted in many issues and concerns that advocates and our clients face being address. These meetings showed a strong commitment from DHS to work with advocates to make the system better for everyone. We believe that we can continue our work with DHS over the interim to find a solution that does not weaken Marylander's right to reimbursement.

Thus, we strongly urge an unfavorable report for HB 1434, so stakeholders can continue to meet to discuss a strong pathway forward.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope