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Health and Government Operations  
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Health Occupations and Long Term Care

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Joint Committee on Program Open Space  
and Agricultural Land Preservation

**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB502 - Department of Human Services - Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards - Fraud (Prevent Electronic Benefits Theft Act of 2023)**

February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Thank you Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Delegate Robbyn Lewis testifying on behalf of HB502, which is the crossfile of SB2. This bill will restore Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to innocent Marylanders whose rightful benefits were stolen from them by means of electronic benefit theft. The bill also defines procedures that shall be used by the Department of Human Services to prevent and resolve electronic benefit fraud cases.

Given national and local press stories about electronic benefit (EBT) theft, the state has an interest in protecting Marylanders whose benefits were stolen by electronic means, such as “skimming” or other malicious practices. There is so much interest, in fact, that two EBT bills were introduced in the House: this one and also HB697, which is the crossfile of SB401. In the interest of simplicity, these two bills have been consolidated. Amendment language to consolidate the bills will be provided to you.

Please note that the process of consolidating these two EBT theft prevention bills has been collegial and inclusive, with the bills’ sponsors, advocates, and Department of Human Services (DHS) all at the table.

The consensus amendments require DHS to restore stolen benefits without requiring further action from the beneficiary household using federal funds, and if those funds are not available than with state funds. The consensus amendments also require DHS to undertake preventive measures to reduce the likelihood of EBT fraud, including working with local law enforcement.

I look forward to working with stakeholders and members of this committee to finalize the provisions of this bill, and ask for your favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robbyn Lewis', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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