



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1434

Department of Human Services – Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards-
Restoration of Benefits

Senate Finance Committee
March 21, 2024

Position: OPPOSE

Submitted by Mark Huffman, Co-Chair

Member Agencies:

211 Maryland

Anne Arundel County Food Bank

Baltimore Jewish Council

Behavioral Health System Baltimore

CASH Campaign of Maryland

Energy Advocates

Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Family League of Baltimore

Fuel Fund of Maryland

Job Opportunities Task Force

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,
Inc.

League of Women Voters of Maryland

Loyola University Maryland

Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Maryland Community Action
Partnership

Maryland Family Network

Maryland Food Bank

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Paul's Place

St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore

Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

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Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly opposes HB 1434, which would reverse a key component of a law MAP supported in 2023 that currently ensures people whose food or cash assistance is stolen can quickly have their much-needed benefits restored.

Thanks to strong collaboration between the Department of Human Services, the legislature, and nonprofits, thousands of Marylanders who have been the victims of “card skimming” thefts of benefits from their EBT cards have been able to have their funds restored. This program is working as intended and we see no reason to make changes to it at this time.

HB 1434 would potentially create a situation where some families who are victims of EBT theft can have their benefits restored and some cannot, depending on when they experience theft and whether DHS still has funds available. Families who are eligible for SNAP and Temporary Cash Assistance are barely getting by, and losing those funds to theft means they may go hungry or miss a rent or other essential payment that results in additional consequences.

MAP believes the best way to protect families and ensure the state can maintain its financial obligations is to continue to increase the security of EBT cards, which will help prevent thefts from happening in the first place. DHS has only recently begun to roll out and publicize new security features. We urge the committee to allow time for these solutions to work, rather than create a situation in which theft victims could be left to go without food or other essentials.

We respectfully request the Committee to make an unfavorable report on HB 1434.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.