



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Gloria Brown Burnett, Interim Secretary*

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 1318 - DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES -  
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - ERROR REDUCTION -  
POSITION: INFORMATION**

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and the opportunity to provide information on House Bill 1318 (HB 1318).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Family Investment Administration (FIA) implements the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is affected by HB 1318.

HB 1318 would direct DHS to develop a comprehensive process to reduce administrative errors within SNAP to meet a goal of error rates equal to the best-performing state. The SNAP Payment Error Rate (PER) is a federal measure of how accurately states determine eligibility for households and benefit amounts by checking the number of under- or overpayments. PER is not a measure of fraud. South Dakota currently leads the nation with a 3% PER, significantly under the national average of 10%. However, South Dakota served less than 40,000 households in 2025, less than one-tenth the national average of 400,000 to 430,000 households per state in federal fiscal year 2024. Maryland's 2025 caseload averaged between 300,000 and 380,000 households.

DHS began taking measures to reduce our SNAP PER in 2023. DHS continues multiple measures to reduce our SNAP PER. When the Moore-Miller Administration came into office in 2023, we inherited a 35.56% SNAP PER, the second-highest in the nation. Over the past three years, we cut the rate by more than 60%, down to 13.64%, and we are not

done. Information on DHS efforts to lower our SNAP PER is detailed in our January 28 [briefing](#) to the Senate Finance Committee (see pages 2-26 and 38-44).

Change -in law, policy, or practice- is a primary driver of payment errors. We predict implementing changes required by H.R. 1 (2025) will likely increase errors in every state. We are currently rolling out interactive staff training specifically focused on H.R. 1 policy changes to minimize errors. We developed training modules that provide real-life scenarios for caseworkers to practice applying H.R.1 changes for new and existing customers. DHS is also automating select functions in our Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system to free staff time for work that cannot be automated. Additionally, we are implementing the National Accuracy Clearinghouse, a new nationwide data-comparison system that prevents people from receiving SNAP benefits in more than one state simultaneously.

We are engaging in new partnerships to bring in external expertise. US Digital Response provided an analysis of our SNAP processes, including qualitative reviews with our caseworkers. The partnership focused on identifying root causes, improving pre-eligibility reviews, and applying best practices for improving both our PER and our Application Processing Timeliness Rate. We are partnering with Georgetown University to develop a Predictive Risk Scoring Model that leverages historical data and external wage records to calculate a SNAP error risk score for active SNAP cases. The model identifies high-risk households and flags conflicting income data for targeted, proactive caseworker intervention.

Unfortunately, the federal payment error process is a lagging indicator, reflecting eligibility decisions made six months earlier. Maryland cannot accelerate or control when the improvements we make appear in our official PER. What we can control is continued commitment to sustained, measurable improvement in the quality of eligibility and payment decisions. DHS is confident that our efforts will bear fruit in a lower SNAP PER. However, we are unable to guarantee a specific PER by a specific future date.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide informational testimony to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at [justin.hayes1@maryland.gov](mailto:justin.hayes1@maryland.gov).

In service,

  
Gloria Brown Burnett  
Interim Secretary