



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

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

March 19, 2026

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

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 1331 - MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES - PUBLIC BENEFITS - ELIGIBILITY AND  
PROHIBITIONS - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully requests an unfavorable report for House Bill 1331 (HB 1331).

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) and processes Medical Assistance (MA) eligibility determinations, both of which are affected by HB 1331.

HB 1331 would require DHS to revise our eligibility determination processes for MA and SNAP, adding more frequent eligibility reviews and additional verifications. DHS would also be required to implement multiple duplicative data-sharing agreements in order to conduct regular reviews against other state and federal agency records. Additionally, DHS would have to publish quarterly reports on investigations and compliance findings relating to SNAP fraud.

DHS does not believe that the policies detailed in HB 1331 address concerns around fraudulent receipt of SNAP or MA benefits in an efficient or cost-effective way. Additionally, HB 1331 does not present a meaningful strategy to reduce our SNAP payment error rate. In fact, the over-verification required by HB 1331 could actually

increase Maryland's payment error rate, leading to additional costs to the state for implementing [H.R. 1 \(2025\)](#).

Federal regulations require SNAP cases to be reviewed semi-annually and MA cases annually, unless the recipient reports changes during the eligibility period. This national standard is an efficient approach to preventing fraud in Maryland, as well as in other states. By mandating additional verifications beyond the federal requirements, HB 1331 would make our operations cumbersome and inefficient, and extend wait times for benefits that are critical for the Marylanders we serve.

HB 1331 would significantly increase the workload associated with managing cases for SNAP and MA by requiring increased review and processing of active cases. In addition to increased staffing needs, the need for more frequent data matches in our Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system would significantly increase the workload for staff and require costly system updates. The monthly income checks required under HB 1331 would also increase our data matching costs. HB 1331 would create millions in additional administrative costs for DHS, including staff salaries, system enhancements, and access to third-party databases for wage and asset verifications.

Given the significant uncertainty in federal policy and the escalating fiscal shortfalls forecasted through Fiscal Year 2028, the Department urges caution against legislation that increases administrative expenditures or diverts revenue without sustainable funding offsets. In light of the current fiscal crisis, the State must remain disciplined and strategic in its funding decisions to protect essential services for all Marylanders.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide unfavorable 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