



Dave Yost • Auditor of State

House Community and Family Advancement Committee

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Written Testimony

House Bill 50
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Chairman Ginter, Vice-Chair Conditt, Ranking Member Boyd and members of the House Community and Family Advancement Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 50. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify some facts surrounding this bill.

House Bill 50 is fully compliant with all federal rules and regulations of the SNAP program. USDA rules allow a state to place an identification photo on the card. The current bill language does not include exemptions for children because it clearly states that this requirement would only apply to adults. In addition, photos for many would be those already on file with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, meaning no undue hardship would be put on recipients. Additional accommodations could be made by ODJFS on a case-by-case basis, in compliance with federal rules. Based on these exemptions, LSC estimates that the number of exempted households would be roughly 43%. While 7 CFR 274.8(f)(5) requires sufficient capacity and process for issuing photo EBT cards, and to address hardships, there is no reason to believe Ohio is incapable of providing such accommodations as other states have done. Much of this will be addressed in rule, as informed by ODJFS practice.

The fiscal note prepared by LSC indicates that one-time costs could be roughly \$1.5 to \$2.0 million under the bill, with ongoing annual costs somewhere between \$1.0 and \$3.0 million. These numbers are much lower than other inflated estimates that have been stated before the committee. Staff from other states who have implemented the policy place the possible number even lower. For instance, Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (“DTA”) claims an initial startup cost of \$1.5-2 million, with an ongoing cost of \$200,000. This bill language is modeled after what was done in Massachusetts and mirrors their exemptions.

Many of the concerns brought up in previous committee hearings deal with the implementation by other states. Implementation pitfalls are avoidable, and are not indicative of the policy itself. USDA provides a great deal of information and training to vendors on how to assist customers using SNAP. In addition, SNAP beneficiaries are given literature alerting them to their rights, as well as to a staffed customer service hotline. Identification photos would act as an important deterrent to those who would misuse and abuse the SNAP system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional written testimony in support of House Bill 50. Our office would like to thank Representative Schaffer for his leadership on this issue.