



Representative Michael E. Henne
Ohio House District 40

HB 119 Sponsor Testimony
House Community and Family Advancement Committee
March 29th, 2017

Chair Ginter, Vice Chair Conditt, Ranking Member Boyd and members of the Community and Family Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present HB119, Welfare Fraud Prevention.

Before we go into the details of the bill, I want to emphasize this is not about cutting benefits to the families these programs are designed to help. This bill is simply about eliminating fraud and making sure Ohioan's tax dollars are correctly allocated. We are stewards of the tax payers' money and we must take that job seriously in order to make sure we are using those dollars as efficiently as possible.

As part of the benefits application process, HB 119 shall require recipients to complete a personal knowledge-based quiz similar to the Department of Taxation's process for sending returns. Additionally, the bill will require the Department of Jobs and Family Services and the Office of Medicaid to perform quarterly eligibility verifications in place of the current annual requirement on the following:

- Earned and unearned income
- Employment status and changes in employment
- Immigration status
- State residency
- Enrollment in other state-administered assistance programs in and out of Ohio
- Financial resources
- Lottery winnings
- Incarceration status
- Death records
- Any available information related to potential fraud or ID theft

To accomplish these checks the department may contract with a vendor, and shall explore joining a multi-state cooperative to identify individuals enrolled in other states.

If a discrepancy is found, the department will redetermine eligibility and the recipient will be notified, affording them an opportunity to respond. If the recipient does not respond a second notice will be sent indicating the department intends to discontinue benefits. If the recipient disputes the findings and the department discovers an error, the department shall correct it and take no further action. If the discrepancy is confirmed, the department shall notify the recipient



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and appropriate action will be taken. If fraud is suspected, the case shall be referred for investigation to the county prosecutor.

During this entire process, benefits are not discontinued or denied until final determination is made, doing everything possible not to harm anyone relying on these benefits.

As we work through this budget process, we all can understand we have limited dollars and many in need. We need to make sure that the dollars used in these programs are going to their intended recipients. Every dollar which goes to someone who does not qualify is a dollar diverted from someone truly in need.

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 119. I'd like to introduce Representative McColley to provide his testimony.

