



State Senator William P. Coley II
Senate Bill 96 Sponsor Testimony
Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
March 21, 2017

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, thank you the opportunity to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 96. Senate Bill 96 will provide Ohio with tools to reduce fraud and improper payments in Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Currently, Ohio requires limited eligibility verification before approving SNAP and Medicaid benefits and annual verification thereafter. The state relies on enrollees to report any changes affecting their eligibility throughout the year and many changes go unreported. This legislation would require both programs (to the extent it is applicable for Medicaid) to verify eligibility quarterly and to expand the areas in which they check using state, federal, and commercial databases, including:

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

If the department receives information which questions an enrollee's eligibility, the individual must be given notification and procedures will be in place to allow the enrollee to challenge the findings before any changes to benefits are made. If fraud is discovered, the department shall refer the case to the county prosecutor for investigation.

The bill allows, but does not require, the department to contract with a third party to provide the information only if annualized savings exceed the contract's total annual cost

to the state. To prove its effectiveness, the departments will provide a report detailing the impact of the legislation, including savings and cost avoidance.

Many of these changes have been initiated in other states and proven very successful in correcting errors and removing fraud. This is not about taking away benefits from people who need assistance, the very people welfare programs were created to help. Instead, it protects the most vulnerable and taxpayer dollars from those no longer eligible but who remain in the system.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 96. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.