



Tim Schaffer
20th District

Ohio Senate
Senate Building
Room 137, First Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-8076
sd20@ohiosenate.gov

Committees:
Agriculture & Natural Resources, Chair
Insurance
Rules and Reference
Transportation
Ways and Means

**Senate Government Oversight Committee
Senate Bill 240 — Sponsor Testimony
May 8, 2023**

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 240.

This bill is the continuation of the Ohio General Assembly's effort to reform our public assistance benefits systems to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse, while preserving benefits for the families and individuals who are eligible to receive assistance and need it the most.

Representative Scott Wiggam and I issued the Public Assistance Benefits Accountability Task Force Co-Chair Recommendations Report to the General Assembly late last year containing recommendations for improvements and reforms within the major public assistance benefits programs.

This bill contains several important changes based on that Task Force report that affect those programs including requiring the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to update its systems to track caseworker activity and provide training to prevent improper determinations.

The bill also requires ODJFS to monitor the activity of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) accounts with balances over \$2,000, removes the ability of ODJFS to waive work requirements to receive SNAP benefits for able-bodied working adults without dependents, and require noncustodial parents to comply with a court order for child support as a condition of receiving SNAP benefits.

In April of 2023, the Columbus Dispatch reported that 2,800 Ohioans had high balance SNAP accounts with over \$5,000.

The highest balance reported had over \$38,434 in unused benefits.

These programs were not designed to be savings accounts. These were designed to feed families in crisis.

Additionally, language under the bill makes sure that convicted felony drug traffickers are not receiving SNAP benefits without complying to random drug testing for three years following their fulfillment of obligations to a court.

The bill also requires ODJFS to give leaders of the General Assembly a 30 day notice when they submit a wavier or state plan amendment to the Federal government regarding public assistance benefits programs.

Furthermore, the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) will no longer be allowed to conduct post-enrollment verification of income and non-income related eligibility under the bill. We are also eliminating ODM's ability designate itself as a qualified health entity for the purpose of making presumptive eligibility determinations.

These changes make sure that we are limiting state Medicaid spending to its intended purpose and making sure those dollars are going toward those who are eligible to receive Medicaid and need the assistance.

This is a necessary corrective measure following the federal moratorium on disenrolling individuals from Medicaid, which lasted from March 18, 2020 until March 31, 2023. The federal moratorium prevented the State of Ohio from disenrolling individuals who were not eligible to receive Medicaid assistance.

These programs provide a key safety net for those who need them the most and there are no proposals in this bill that will take benefits away from those deserving families and individuals that are eligible to receive public assistance benefits.

Thank you once again Chairwoman Roegner and members of the committee for the opportunity to present this legislation to you today. I will be glad to answer any questions at this time.