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Ohio Senate Workforce Development Committee

Written Proponent Testimony on SR 29

Maura O'Connor, Clark County

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chairwoman Reynolds, Ranking Member Ingram, and distinguished members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on Senate Resolution 29.

My name is Maura O'Connor, and I am a resident of Springfield, Ohio, in Clark County. I am a single mother of three young children, a paraprofessional in my local school district, and a three-time victim of SNAP skimming. I write to you today in support of SR 29, urging Congress to restore stolen SNAP benefits and implement stronger fraud protections.

Despite working for Springfield City Schools for over six years, my salary is not enough to cover all my family's needs. My household includes my nine-year-old son and twin three-year-old daughters. After covering essential expenses, such as my mortgage, utilities, daycare, fuel, and medicine, there is little left. SNAP benefits help me provide healthy meals, ensuring my children have the food they need to grow and thrive.

Yet, in the past year, my benefits have been stolen three times due to skimming fraud. The first time, I discovered my card had been used in Arkansas for over \$200 when I tried to check out at Kroger online and it was declined. Upon checking the balance on my app, I was shocked to see the fraudulent charge. I had no idea reimbursement was even an option – no one had informed me.

The second time, my benefits were drained through three separate charges at a bodega in the Bronx, New York.

The third time was devastating. Just before Christmas in December 2024, I was shopping for holiday meals with my twin daughters. After scanning my groceries, my SNAP card was declined. The cashier looked at me with sympathy and said, "I'm sorry, sweetie, your balance is \$0." I had received my benefits the day before, yet my account had been emptied. Embarrassed and panicked, I was fortunate to have a holiday bonus from work to cover the cost of the essentials, but I had to put many things back on the shelf. Otherwise, I don't know how I would have fed my children during their holiday break. By then, I knew about reimbursements, but they were no longer available.

I urge Congress to fund and implement stronger anti-fraud measures including replacing outdated EBT cards with modern chip-enabled cards. Families like mine should not have to choose between skipping meals and skipping medication. Without these protections, more working parents will be forced into food bank lines simply because their benefits were stolen.

SNAP provides critical stability for my family, but we must strengthen its security. Thank you for the opportunity to testify to such an important issue, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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