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Ohio Poverty Law Center Written Proponent Testimony
Senate Resolution 29
Ohio Senate Workforce Development Committee
Tuesday, April 1, 2025

Chair Koehler, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Ohio Senate Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony in support of Senate Resolution 29. My name is Danielle DeLeon Spires, and I am a policy advocate at the Ohio Poverty Law Center. The Ohio Poverty Law Center (OPLC) advocates for evidence-based policies that protect and expand the rights of low-income Ohioans. We are a non-profit working closely with Ohio's legal aid community, serving Ohioans who are living, working, and raising their families in poverty.

OPLC joins Senator Schaffer in support of Senate Resolution 29, to urge Congress to resume restoring stolen SNAP benefits and implement anti-fraud measures in the SNAP program. Ohio has seen thousands of individuals relying on SNAP benefits lose those benefits to electronic skimming fraud. Currently, Ohioans who experience skimming have no way to reclaim lost benefits. This has impacted at least 31,000 Ohioans at the cost of an estimated \$17 million.

The federal government provided reimbursement funds from mid-2023 through December 2024. Congress did not include an extension of the program into the short-term spending bill that recently passed. Therefore, any individual who has experienced stolen benefits has had no path to recover those benefits. A loss of those benefits significantly impacts vulnerable Ohioans, who rely on those funds as a crucial piece to support their families.

In addition, without the path to reimbursement, beneficiaries may not report theft to the county agencies and it may be difficult to account for the full number of Ohioans experiencing skimming. By taking the next step and implementing the crucial technology upgrade to chip-enabled EBT cards, families will have additional security that their benefits will be protected.

We also urge support of provisions in House Bill 96, the proposed operating budget to appropriate \$5.3 million to support Ohio's portion in administration of this upgrade, as well as several provisions to build further protections through Ohio Department of Job and Families Services (JFS) rules. These efforts would include JFS to develop a mechanism that allows SNAP recipients to report alleged fraudulent transactions directly through the website. In addition to the budget, similar security upgrades are included in the bipartisan House Bill 163.

By enabling this upgrade to chip-enabled cards, while also introducing new measures to monitor fraud, Ohio families will retain access to these crucial funds. Thank you for the opportunity to support bipartisan efforts on behalf of Ohioans in need of security support to continue to provide for their families.

Sincerely,

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