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Boscola Bulletin

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LISA BOSCOLA 18TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

Senator Boscola Introduces Bill to Crack Down on SNAP Skimming Thieves

By Senator Lisa Boscola

State Senator Lisa M. Boscola (D-Northampton) announced the introduction of Senate Bill 362 aimed at increasing penalties for criminals who steal food assistance benefits from Pennsylvania families through a method known as "SNAP skimming." This growing form of electronic fraud allows thieves to steal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits from recipients by capturing card information and draining accounts, leaving families and seniors without the resources they need to put food on the table.

"As of August 2023, more than 2,750 reports of SNAP electronic theft were submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, with nearly half a million dollars stolen from individuals who depend on these benefits for survival," Boscola said. "This is not just fraud, it's theft from our most vulnerable citizens and a betrayal of taxpayer dollars."

The legislation will create a new criminal offense specifically targeting those who use skimming devices to commit SNAP fraud. Under the proposed bill, theft of SNAP benefits of \$1,000 or more would be elevated from a third-degree felony to a second-degree felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$25,000 fine. Smaller thefts of less than \$1,000 would be raised from a misdemeanor to a third-degree felony, carrying a sentence of up to seven years in prison and a \$15,000 fine. Additionally, convicted offenders would be permanently banned from receiving public assistance.

"With more than two million Pennsylvanians relying on SNAP, including children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities, we must send a clear message: if you prey on those in need, you will face serious consequences," Boscola added. "While the federal government had taken some steps to help victims recover stolen funds, that seems to be ending. Absent additional card security measures, we need stronger deterrents to stop these crimes before they happen."

Due to recent federal changes, victims of SNAP theft after December 20, 2024, can no longer be reimbursed, placing even greater urgency on preventing these crimes. Senator Boscola is urging swift passage of this legislation to ensure Pennsylvanian's are protected from organized criminal enterprises raiding taxpayer funded benefits accounts.

For more helpful information regarding known SNAP scams and how to protect yourself, visit the PA Department of Human Services website, [here](https://www.dhs.pa.gov).



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