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## Boscola Bulletin

INDEPENDENT. EFFECTIVE. YOUR VOICE IN HARRISBURG.

LISA BOSCOLA 18TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

### Boscola Applauds State Efforts to Combat SNAP Benefits Theft, Calls for Stronger Penalties

By Senator Lisa Boscola

March 19, 2025, Harrisburg, PA – In response to the Pennsylvania Office of State Inspector General's (OSIG) recent announcement of felony charges against an individual for stealing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits from 17 Pennsylvanians, Senator Lisa Boscola (D-Northampton) reinforced her commitment to protecting taxpayer funds and beneficiaries by introducing legislation to increase penalties for SNAP skimming crimes.

"The theft of SNAP benefits is not just an attack on individual recipients—it's an attack on struggling families, children, and seniors who rely on this vital assistance to put food on the table," said Senator Boscola. "I commend the OSIG and law enforcement for taking decisive action against those who prey on the most vulnerable in our communities. But we must do more to ensure these criminals face serious consequences."

The OSIG's announcement detailed felony and misdemeanor charges against an individual accused of using stolen EBT card information to make over \$8,000 in fraudulent purchases across multiple states. SNAP skimming, a sophisticated form of fraud involving illegal card-skimming devices, has become an alarming problem in Pennsylvania. As of August 2023, the Department of Human Services reported nearly 2,750 incidents of electronic SNAP theft, totaling \$459,084 in stolen funds.

To further combat this growing issue, Senator Boscola has introduced Senate Bill 362 to significantly increase penalties for those convicted of SNAP skimming. Under her proposal:

- Theft of SNAP benefits of \$1,000 or more would be elevated from a third-degree felony to a second-degree felony, carrying a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$25,000 fine.
- Theft of less than \$1,000, or an attempt to steal benefits, would be upgraded from a third-degree misdemeanor to a third-degree felony, punishable by up to 7 years in prison and a \$15,000 fine.

- Convicted offenders would face permanent ineligibility for assistance programs.

"Our laws must reflect the severity of these crimes," said Boscola. "Right now, criminal enterprises are exploiting hard-working taxpayers and low-income families with little fear of consequences. By strengthening penalties, we send a clear message that Pennsylvania will not tolerate this exploitation."

Senator Boscola urges her colleagues in the Senate to join her in supporting this critical legislation and ensuring that Pennsylvania remains proactive in protecting SNAP recipients from fraud.

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