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## Senate of Pennsylvania

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March 7, 2012

TO: All Senators

FROM: Senator Jane M. Earll

Re: Access Card and Electronic Benefit Transfer Card Photo Identification

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation requiring a photographic image of benefit recipients on benefit transfer devices.

Specifically, this legislation amends the Public Welfare Code to require the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (Department) to ensure that a person who uses a benefit transfer device has his or her photographic image on the benefit transfer device. As defined in this legislation, the term "benefit transfer device" means the Pennsylvania Access Card or Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card.

Currently, there is no requirement for photo identification on the Access or EBT cards that are issued by the Department. All applicants, whether applying in person or online, are required to physically make an appearance at the local County Assistance Office at some point in the process to show proof of citizenship and identity if they are a U.S. citizen.

The current Access and EBT cards are nearly indistinguishable from a regular bank card. Because the cards function like an ATM card, it is often difficult to prevent them from being misused and such abuse undermines the credibility of the system. In these difficult economic times, it is essential that we look closely at how money is being spent in our state and prevent any abuse of funds or fraudulent behavior. We must ensure that our programs run efficiently and that our public assistance dollars are reaching those who are truly in need. Such a requirement would make it more difficult for cards to be sold or misused by those who do not qualify for government assistance.

If you would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Christine Zubeck at 787-8927 or [czubeck@pasen.gov](mailto:czubeck@pasen.gov).