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Testimony on

L.D. 1820, "An Act To Reduce Abuse of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program through Restriction of Electronic Benefits Transfers"

**Presented by
Representative Allen Michael Nadeau
District 1**

Health and Human Services Committee

March 25, 2014

Good afternoon Senator Craven, Representative Farnsworth, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am State Representative Allen Michael Nadeau, and I am pleased to introduce L.D. 1820, the Governor's bill to reduce abuse of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program through geographic restriction of the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, as its lead sponsor.

Many of my constituents have expressed to me that they are happy to offer a helping hand to their neighbors, but they want to ensure that the money is not misused. This bill attempts to prevent the use of TANF welfare benefits by folks who are not Maine residents. The Department of Health and Human Services has data that EBT cards have been used all across the country by individuals for periods longer than one year. It is one thing to visit a relative in New Hampshire for the day, but it is another to use a Maine EBT card in California for over a year. The first person likely will not be impacted by this legislation, but the person who moved to California should not be on Maine's TANF program.

This measure restricts electronic use of the EBT card for TANF benefits to Maine. This does not restrict where food stamps on the EBT card are spent, and it does not affect other accounts on the EBT card. It also does not restrict a person's ability to remove cash from the card and travel to other states. This does not mean you cannot go visit a sick relative in another state. It does mean that folks who have left the State will be identified and removed from the program. It further means that if you are trafficking an EBT card to someone and they use it outside Maine, which is illegal, you will suffer the consequences.

We all believe in helping each other. The people in my district would give the shirts off their backs to someone in need; however, we need to help those who really are in need. Moreover, the money in this program should go to people who truly live in Maine.

It is a pleasure to sponsor this bill. Should you have any questions, I know the people from the Department will be able to answer them. Thank you for your time.

District 1 Allagash, Ashland, Eagle Lake, Fort Kent, St. Francis, Wallagrass and Plantations of Garfield, Nashville, St. John and Winterville, plus the unorganized territory of Northwest Aroostook

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