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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 322 Session of  
2012

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INTRODUCED BY VANCE, SCARNATI, PILEGGI, GORDNER, SCHWANK, BAKER,  
ERICKSON, RAFFERTY, ARGALL, WAUGH, D. WHITE, ALLOWAY,  
BOSCOLA, EARLL, MENSCH, WARD AND BRUBAKER, MAY 31, 2012

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REFERRED TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE, MAY 31, 2012

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A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study  
2 the Department of Public Welfare's usage of electronic  
3 benefit transfer cards as a means of conveying benefits and  
4 to analyze whether biometric smart cards containing a  
5 photograph and other identifying information would generate  
6 State savings, deter fraudulent activities and more  
7 efficiently transfer the payment to the recipient.

8 WHEREAS, The Department of Public Welfare issues electronic  
9 benefit transfer (EBT) cards, otherwise known as ACCESS cards,  
10 to eligible recipients of public assistance; and

11 WHEREAS, The ACCESS cards are used to convey benefits to  
12 recipients in the following programs: Supplemental Nutrition  
13 Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Allowance Program, Temporary  
14 Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance; and

15 WHEREAS, Recipients may access benefits at automated teller  
16 machines or point-of-sale machines when items are purchased in a  
17 store; and

18 WHEREAS, The Department of Public Welfare disbursed  
19 approximately \$5.7 billion in public assistance benefits through  
20 ACCESS cards during the fiscal years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Opportunity exists for selling or transferring  
3 ACCESS cards to noneligible individuals; and

4 WHEREAS, An audit in September 2011 raises significant  
5 questions regarding the monitoring, oversight and enforcement  
6 activities of the Department of Public Welfare with regard to  
7 the ACCESS cards; and

8 WHEREAS, An increasing number of this Commonwealth's  
9 residents are in need of public assistance; and

10 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth must ensure that only eligible  
11 recipients access benefits so that resources exist to provide  
12 benefits to all of those that are eligible; therefore be it

13 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Legislative Budget and  
14 Finance Committee to study the costs and benefits of providing  
15 each eligible recipient with a new ACCESS card containing  
16 additional identifying information; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the study consider the costs and benefits of  
18 ACCESS cards with varying degrees of information which may  
19 include the following:

20 (1) photograph;

21 (2) fingerprints; and

22 (3) other personal details of the recipient;

23 and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the study take into account any technology  
25 costs associated with the purchase of new equipment and ongoing  
26 expenses; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee  
28 examine the types of abuse that occur with the ACCESS cards and  
29 whether additional identifying information will stop the abuse;  
30 and be it further

1       RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee  
2 recommend whether any savings generated through enhanced  
3 identifiers offset the costs of ACCESS card modifications; and  
4 be it further

5       RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee  
6 report to the Senate the results of its findings and  
7 recommendations by November 30, 2012.