

# Fixing SNAP: How States can and should stand up to the Feds

**Presentation to the Secretaries Innovation Group**

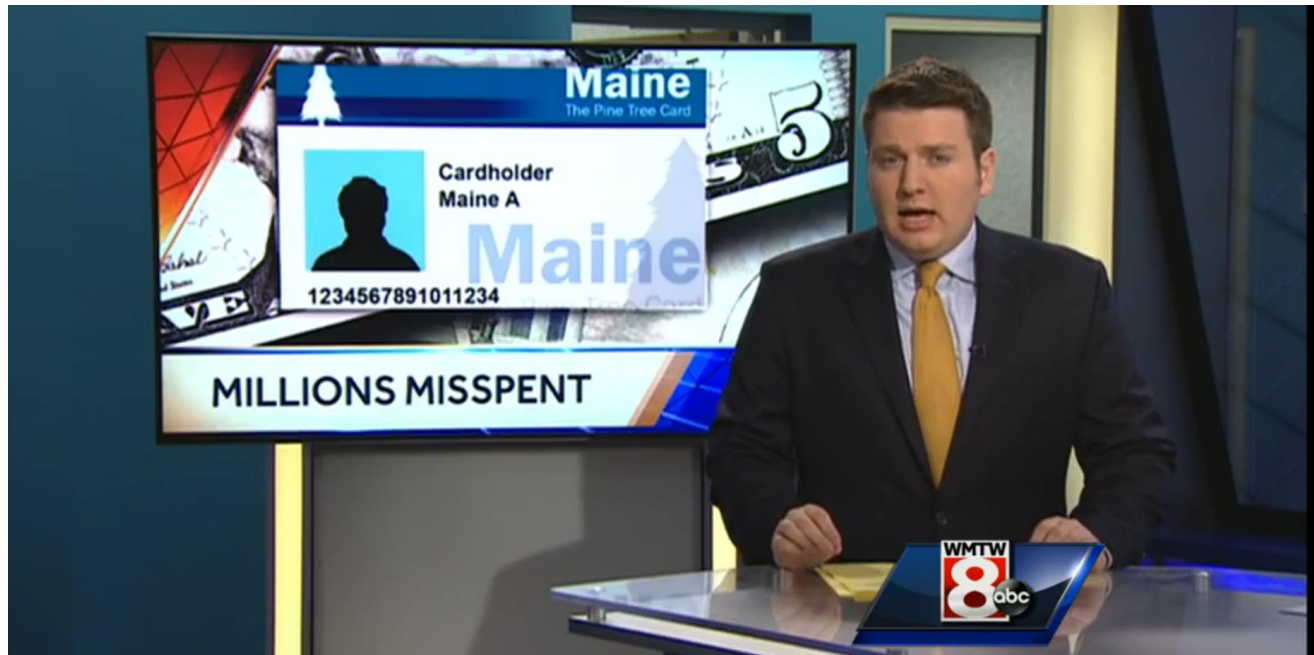
Mary C. Mayhew  
Commissioner

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

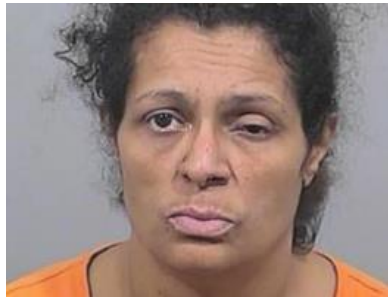
# Secretaries Innovation Group: Overview

- Is there a problem with SNAP?
- How do we fix it?
- What are the barriers for success?
- Maine Examples

# Secretaries Innovation Group: Fraud and Abuse



# Secretaries Innovation Group: Fraud and Abuse



What do a



common?

# Secretaries Innovation Group: Fraud and Abuse



## **Drug trafficking, EBT abuse sends former Wiscasset**

**■ Rockland woman sentenced to 18 months for theft of \$80,000 in welfare benefits**

**| Portland Press Herald**

By

Po:

**Ex Winslow woman pleads guilty to stealing from sports teams, state**

**Former Maine DHHS worker gets 9 months in jail for stealing benefits**

**| Portland Press Herald**

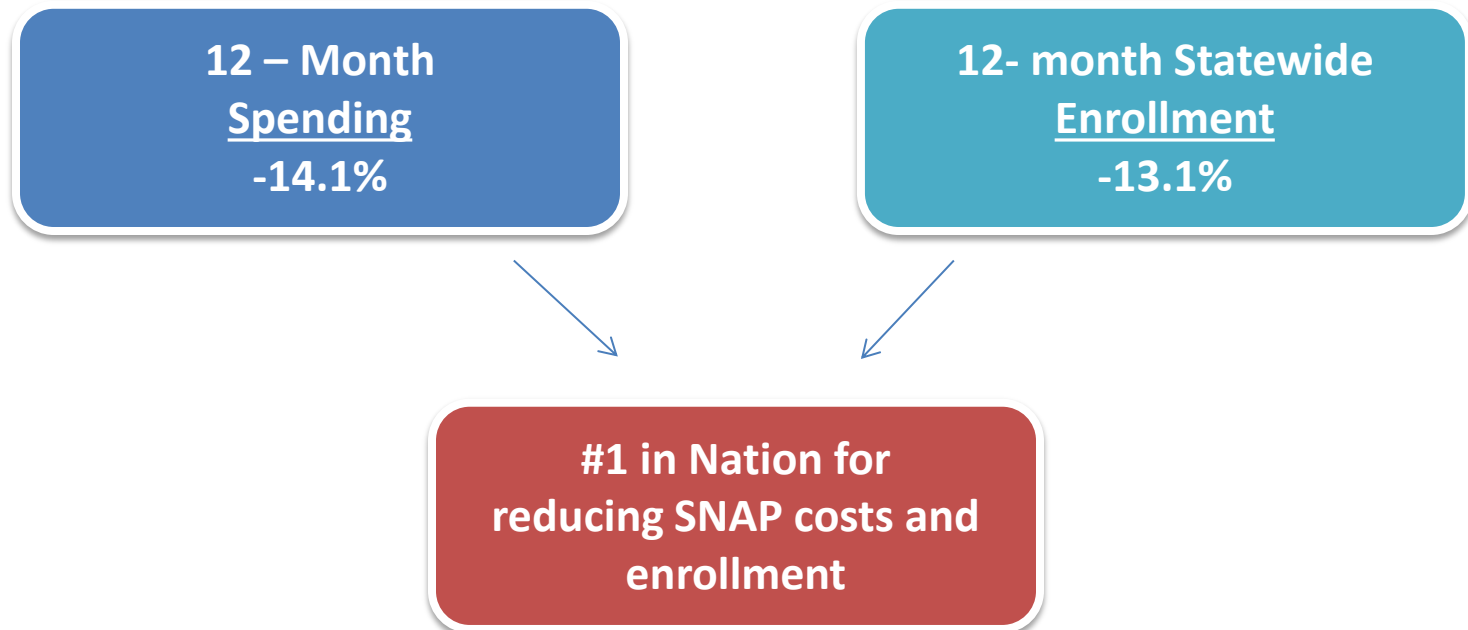
By

Pc

**Whitefield worm digger jailed for welfare fraud**

# Secretaries Innovation Group: Maine Reforms

- Photos on over **36,500** EBT cards
- EBT cards are blocked in strip clubs, liquor stores, and bars
- Moving Mainers back to work and off the by eliminating ABAWD waiver



# Secretaries Innovation Group: Barriers to Success

- False Civil Rights Allegations
- Misinterpreting Policy
- Threats of Financial Penalties
- Refusal to go after welfare fraud

# Secretaries Innovation Group: National Reforms

- Mandatory Photos on EBT cards
- Access to key SNAP purchase data
- Restrictions on who is authorized to use an EBT card
- Limit the amount of replacement EBT cards
- Tougher requirements for convenience stores
- Support State based OIGs
- Require cooperation with Fraud Investigators
- Eliminate ALL federal waivers
- Strengthen definition of “Household”
- Eliminate “Simplified Reporting”
- Increase reimbursement rate for recovered fraudulent monies



# Secretaries Innovation Group: USDA Hypocrisy

## Quotes from Under Secretary Kevin Concannon:

*“USDA is working on multiple fronts, harnessing modern technology and identifying promising practices, to root out any fraud and abuse from SNAP. Not only are we focused on removing retailers who ignore the rules, **we are actively working with state agencies to identify and remove recipients who misuse their benefits via illegal trafficking—the sale of food benefits for cash.**”*

"Don't kid yourself that it has any real effect on reducing fraud," he says. "It's more of a political statement than an effective statement."

# Secretaries Innovation Group: USDA Hypocrisy

## Letters to Maine from the Feds

Cease its practice of documenting case-sensitive, client-specific data for those clients who refuse to participate in the photo EBT program. The State may only collect the number of individuals or households who refuse to participate if needed for transparency or statistical purposes.

There are significant civil rights concerns about the State's practice of taking photos of all non-applicant heads of households or other non-applicant household members, as the implementation appears to violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any individual who applies for SNAP on behalf of eligible household members must be able to access the program without fear.

The State must:

- Cease its practice of requiring face-to-face interviews for households that have not affirmatively opted to have a photo on their EBT card; and

# Secretaries Innovation Group: Conclusion

- States can no longer afford to sit back and watch federal dollars fuel the drug trade
- States must work together to push meaningful reform in Washington
- Pushing back against FNS yields concrete results

Questions and Comments?