



## **Accessing Welfare in Casinos, Strip Clubs, and Liquor Stores**

A provision in the House-passed Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011 (H.R. 3630) would restrict the use of welfare Electronic Benefit Transaction (EBT) cards in casinos, strip clubs, and liquor stores. H.R. 3567 contains this same provision, but in a stand-alone bill. Many media outlets have highlighted the access to and use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash in such locations:

- [Arizona](#): ABC15 in Phoenix found a number of recipients had accessed their TANF cash through ATMs in bars, liquor stores, adult entertainment stores, and other questionable locations.
- [California](#): A Los Angeles Times investigation found that [\\$1.8 million](#) in TANF funds were withdrawn in casinos, and that [\\$12,000](#) was accessed in strip clubs. Shortly after the report was published, Governor Schwarzenegger implemented a [block on access to TANF cash](#) in casinos and other gambling locations, adult entertainment businesses, bars, and other locations.
- [Colorado](#): ABC 7 in Denver found that \$10,000 in TANF cash was withdrawn at questionable locations over a 12-month period including casinos, strip clubs, and liquor stores. The State passed a law in 1998 to ban access to funds in casinos and liquor stores, but there appears to be [little oversight](#).
- [Georgia](#): Fox 5 Atlanta aired an investigative report on individuals accessing TANF cash in liquor stores, finding that approximately \$150,000 in cash was accessed in liquor stores, bars, and nightclubs.
- [Missouri](#): News 4 St. Louis reviewed TANF benefit card transactions and found a number of withdrawals were made in bars, casinos, and strip clubs, causing Senator Dick Durbin to ask the State to look into the issue.
- [Michigan](#): A Michigan State Senator introduced a bill to block access to TANF cash in casinos after discovering through his investigation that more than \$87,000 had been withdrawn from one Detroit casino over a 12-month period.
- [New York](#): News 10 Rochester found that more than \$34,000 in TANF cash had been withdrawn in casinos, off-track betting locations, and bingo halls in the Rochester area.
- [Washington](#): King 5 News in Seattle found that 13,000 TANF recipients withdrew approximately \$2 million at casinos in 2010. Shortly after the investigation, the State [took action](#) to block transactions in casinos.