

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 1997.

Approved April 29, 1997.

CHAPTER 131

(Senate Bill 81)

AN ACT concerning

Food Stamp Benefits - Prohibited Acts - Penalties

FOR the purpose of altering the penalties for fraud in connection with the food stamp benefits program; and generally relating to the food stamp benefits program.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article 88A - Social Services Administration
Section 89
Annotated Code of Maryland
(1995 Replacement Volume and 1996 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article 88A - Social Services Administration

89.

(a) No unauthorized person may sell or purchase federal food stamp program benefits.

(b) No person may knowingly buy or sell merchandise which has been purchased with federal food stamp program benefits.

(c) [Any person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction is subject to a fine not exceeding \$1,000, or imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both.]

(1) EVERY PERSON VIOLATING THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION IN WHICH THE VALUE OF THE MONEY OR GOODS INVOLVED IS ~~\$500~~ \$1,000 OR MORE IS GUILTY OF A FELONY AND UPON CONVICTION SHALL:

(I) MAKE FULL RESTITUTION OF THE MONEY OR GOODS UNLAWFULLY RECEIVED OR PERFORM COMMUNITY SERVICE, AS DETERMINED BY THE COURT; AND

(II) BE SUBJECT TO A FINE OF NOT MORE THAN \$10,000 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 5 YEARS OR BOTH.