



by [WARNER TODD HUSTON](#) 7 Jan 2013 12:22 [POST A COMMENT](#)

*It seems some New Yorkers on the dole are giving taxpayers the pole. A new [report details](#) how welfare recipients are using their state debit cards at strip clubs, X-rated video shops, and liquor stores.*

Records of 200 million Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) records from January 2011 to July 2012 reveal that the cards were used to withdraw cash at such establishments as "Hank's Saloon in Brooklyn; the Blue Door Video porn shop in the East Village; The Anchor, a sleek SoHo lounge; the Patriot Saloon in TriBeCa; and Drinks Galore, a liquor distributor in The Bronx."

As with most states, New York's food stamp program prevents use of the assistance at liquor stores and cannot be used to purchase liquor, tobacco, and lottery tickets. But there are no such restrictions on the debit cards which can be used at any ATM.

The state legislature has a few bills in the works to correct this oversight, but currently there are no restrictions on where the cash assistance can be spent.

Unsurprisingly, there are critics of the lack of controls. "This is morally scandalous," said Michael Tanner, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. "I have nothing against strip clubs, but that's not what benefits are for. I don't blame [recipients]. If you are poor, it's a crummy life and you want to have a drink or see a naked woman. I blame the people who are in charge of this."

Unfortunately, welfare reform is not a favorite topic among New York's legislature, said State Sen. Tom Libous (R-Binghamton). Libous is the author of one of the bills that would impose such limits.

The *New York Post* details much of the [violence and crime](#) that occurs regularly at the establishments where EBT cards have been used.