

SENATE BILL 121

P1, E4

(PRE-FILED)

6lr1660
CF 6lr1662

By: **Senator Hester**

Requested: November 1, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Personal Information – Public Servant Protections**

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing a certain protected individual or the agency, entity, or office
4 that the protected individual serves or served to request that a governmental entity
5 or person not publish personal information on the Internet, social media, or social
6 networks or that the governmental entity or person remove the information from any
7 existing publication; specifying certain procedures for the protection of personal
8 information of a protected individual; authorizing certain relief for a violation of this
9 Act; establishing a criminal penalty for publicly posting the personal information of
10 a protected individual under certain circumstances; establishing the Public Servant
11 Address Confidentiality Program administered by the Secretary of State; and
12 generally relating to the protection of personal information.

13 BY adding to

14 Article – State Government
15 Section 7–401 through 7–405 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 4. Personal
16 Information – Public Servant Protections”
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

19 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

20 Article – Real Property
21 Section 3–114(a)
22 Annotated Code of Maryland
23 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

24 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

25 Article – Real Property
26 Section 3–114(d)
27 Annotated Code of Maryland

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

Article – State Government

SUBTITLE 4. PERSONAL INFORMATION – PUBLIC SERVANT PROTECTIONS.

7–401.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
INDICATED.

(B) “ACTUAL ADDRESS” MEANS A RESIDENTIAL STREET ADDRESS,
INCLUDING PRIMARY RESIDENCE OR SECONDARY RESIDENCE, OF A PROTECTED
INDIVIDUAL AS SPECIFIED ON THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL’S APPLICATION TO BE A
PROGRAM PARTICIPANT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

(C) “GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY” MEANS A STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL
ENTITY.

(D) (1) “PERSONAL INFORMATION” MEANS:

(I) A HOME ADDRESS;

(II) A HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER;

(III) A MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER;

(IV) A PERSONAL E–MAIL ADDRESS;

(V) A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER;

(VI) A DRIVER’S LICENSE NUMBER;

(VII) A FEDERAL TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER;

(VIII) A BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER;

(IX) A CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD NUMBER;

(X) A LICENSE PLATE NUMBER OR UNIQUE IDENTIFIER OF A
VEHICLE;

1 (XI) A BIRTH OR MARITAL RECORD;

2 (XII) A CHILD'S NAME;

3 (XIII) A SCHOOL OR DAYCARE;

4 (XIV) A PLACE OF WORSHIP; OR

5 (XV) A PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED IN
6 SUBSECTION (G)(8) OF THIS SECTION.

7 (2) "PERSONAL INFORMATION" DOES NOT INCLUDE:

8 (I) INFORMATION THAT HAS BEEN PUBLICLY DISCLOSED WITH
9 THE CONSENT OF THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL; OR

10 (II) INFORMATION THAT IS RELEVANT TO AND DISPLAYED AS
11 PART OF A NEWS STORY, COMMENTARY, AN EDITORIAL, OR ANY OTHER SPEECH ON
12 MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN.

13 (E) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE PUBLIC SERVANT ADDRESS
14 CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM.

15 (F) "PROGRAM PARTICIPANT" MEANS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL
16 DESIGNATED AS A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

17 (G) "PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL" MEANS:

18 (1) AN ATTORNEY EMPLOYED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY
19 GENERAL;

20 (2) THE STATE PROSECUTOR;

21 (3) A STATE'S ATTORNEY OR ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY;

22 (4) A U.S. ATTORNEY OR OTHER FEDERAL PROSECUTOR DOMICILED
23 IN THE STATE;

24 (5) A CURRENT OR RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER AS
25 DEFINED IN § 1-101 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE;

(6) A CURRENT OR RETIRED MEMBER OF A POLICE FORCE OR OTHER UNIT OF THE UNITED STATES WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PREVENTION AND DETECTION OF CRIME AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE CRIMINAL LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES DOMICILED IN THE STATE;

(7) A FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL; OR

(8) A SPOUSE, A CHILD, OR A DEPENDENT WHO RESIDES IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD AS AN INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED IN ITEMS (1) THROUGH (7) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(H) "PUBLISH" MEANS TO POST OR OTHERWISE MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON THE INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA, OR SOCIAL NETWORKS.

7-402.

(A) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE AGENCY, ENTITY, OR OFFICE IN WHICH THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED, MAY REQUEST THAT A GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY:

(1) NOT PUBLISH THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONAL INFORMATION; OR

(2) REMOVE THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONAL INFORMATION FROM ANY EXISTING PUBLICATION.

(B) A REQUEST MADE UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL:

(1) BE IN WRITING;

(2) BE SENT BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL;

(3) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, PROVIDE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO CONFIRM THAT THE REQUESTER IS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL; AND

(4) ADEQUATELY IDENTIFY THE DOCUMENT, POSTING, OR OTHER PUBLICATION CONTAINING THE PERSONAL INFORMATION.

(C) A REQUEST MADE BY AN AGENCY, ENTITY, OR OFFICE IN WHICH A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED CERTIFIES THAT A REQUESTER IS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL AND NO FURTHER INFORMATION MAY BE REQUIRED TO CONFIRM THAT THE REQUESTER IS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL.

(D) ON RECEIPT OF A REQUEST UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, A GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY SHALL PROMPTLY ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST IN WRITING BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL AND:

(1) TAKE STEPS REASONABLY NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONAL INFORMATION IS NOT PUBLISHED; OR

(2) IF THE PERSONAL INFORMATION IS ALREADY PUBLISHED, PROVIDE FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE PERSONAL INFORMATION WITHIN 72 HOURS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST.

(E) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON BEHALF OF A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, MAY BRING AN ACTION FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION AGAINST A GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY FOR:

(1) DECLARATORY RELIEF;

(2) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF; OR

(3) REASONABLE ATTORNEY'S FEES.

7-403.

(A) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE AGENCY, ENTITY, OR OFFICE IN WHICH THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED, MAY REQUEST THAT A PERSON WHO HAS PUBLISHED THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONAL INFORMATION REMOVE THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONAL INFORMATION FROM PUBLICATION.

(B) A REQUEST MADE UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL:

(1) BE IN WRITING;

(2) BE SENT BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL;

(3) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, PROVIDE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO CONFIRM THAT THE REQUESTER IS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL; AND

(4) ADEQUATELY IDENTIFY THE DOCUMENT, POSTING, OR OTHER PUBLICATION CONTAINING THE PERSONAL INFORMATION.

(C) A REQUEST MADE BY AN AGENCY, ENTITY, OR OFFICE IN WHICH A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED CERTIFIES THAT A REQUESTER IS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL AND NO FURTHER INFORMATION MAY BE REQUIRED TO CONFIRM THAT THE REQUESTER IS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL.

(D) THE PERSON TO WHOM THE REQUEST IS MADE SHALL:

(1) PROVIDE FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE PERSONAL INFORMATION WITHIN 72 HOURS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST; AND

(2) NOTIFY THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL OR THE OFFICE IN WHICH THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL OF THE REMOVAL.

(E) (1) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON BEHALF OF A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, MAY BRING AN ACTION FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION AGAINST A PERSON FOR:

(I) DECLARATORY RELIEF;

(II) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF;

(III) DAMAGES INCURRED AS THE RESULT OF A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION; OR

(IV) REASONABLE ATTORNEY'S FEES.

(2) IN ADDITION TO THE RELIEF PROVIDED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION, IF A COURT FINDS THAT A PERSON WILLFULLY REFUSED TO PROVIDE FOR THE REMOVAL OF PERSONAL INFORMATION KNOWING THAT THE INDIVIDUAL ON BEHALF OF WHOM THE REQUEST WAS MADE WAS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, THE COURT MAY AWARD PUNITIVE DAMAGES.

7-404.

(A) AN INDIVIDUAL MAY NOT KNOWINGLY PUBLISH THE PERSONAL INFORMATION OF A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL IF:

(1) THE INDIVIDUAL KNOWS OR REASONABLY SHOULD KNOW THAT PUBLISHING THE PERSONAL INFORMATION POSES AN IMMINENT AND SERIOUS THREAT TO THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL; AND

(2) THE PUBLISHING OF THE PERSONAL INFORMATION RESULTS IN:

1 (I) AN ASSAULT IN ANY DEGREE;

2 (II) HARASSMENT;

3 (III) TRESPASS; OR

4 (IV) MALICIOUS DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY.

5 (B) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF A
6 MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT NOT
7 EXCEEDING 18 MONTHS OR A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$5,000 OR BOTH.

8 7-405.

9 (A) THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION IS TO:

10 (1) ENABLE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS
11 FOR PUBLIC RECORDS WITHOUT DISCLOSING THE ACTUAL ADDRESS OF A PROGRAM
12 PARTICIPANT;

13 (2) ENCOURAGE INTERAGENCY COOPERATION IN PROVIDING
14 ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS; AND

15 (3) ALLOW GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES AND PERSONS TO ACCEPT A
16 PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S USE OF AN ADDRESS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY OF
17 STATE AS A SUBSTITUTE ADDRESS.

18 (B) (1) THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHALL ESTABLISH AND ADMINISTER A
19 PUBLIC SERVANT ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM FOR PROTECTED
20 INDIVIDUALS.

21 (2) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL MAY APPLY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
22 PROGRAM IN THE MANNER REQUIRED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

23 (3) ON RECEIPT OF AN APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
24 PROGRAM, THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHALL DETERMINE WHETHER THE
25 APPLICANT QUALIFIES AS A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT.

26 (C) (1) A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT MAY:

1 **(I) REQUEST THAT A PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY USE**
2 **A SUBSTITUTE ADDRESS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS THE**
3 **PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S ADDRESS;**

4 **(II) REQUEST THE SHIELDING OF REAL PROPERTY RECORDS IN**
5 **ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 3, SUBTITLE 1, PART II OF THE REAL PROPERTY**
6 **ARTICLE; AND**

7 **(III) REQUEST THAT A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL**
8 **ADDRESS BE SHIELDED FROM PUBLIC INSPECTION IN A RECORD MAINTAINED BY A**
9 **GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY.**

10 **(2) ON RECEIPT OF A REQUEST UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS**
11 **SUBSECTION BY A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT, A PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY**
12 **SHALL:**

13 **(I) PROMPTLY ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST IN**
14 **WRITING BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL; AND**

15 **(II) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPHS (3) AND (4) OF THIS**
16 **SUBSECTION, TAKE STEPS REASONABLY NECESSARY TO COMPLY WITH THE**
17 **REQUEST.**

18 **(3) A CUSTODIAN OF RECORD MAY:**

19 **(I) MAINTAIN A COPY OF A RECORD CONTAINING A PROGRAM**
20 **PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL ADDRESS IN A SEPARATE SECURE AREA TO WHICH PERSONS**
21 **WHO DO NOT HAVE A LEGITIMATE REASON FOR ACCESS ARE DENIED ACCESS;**

22 **(II) PERMIT PUBLIC INSPECTION OF A RECORD WITH THE**
23 **CONSENT OF THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT;**

24 **(III) PERMIT PUBLIC INSPECTION OF A RECORD WITH THE**
25 **ACTUAL ADDRESS REDACTED FROM THE RECORD; OR**

26 **(IV) AFTER NOTIFICATION TO THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT,**
27 **PERMIT PUBLIC INSPECTION OF A RECORD IF THE INSPECTION WILL FURTHER A**
28 **SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC INTEREST OR A LEGITIMATE BUSINESS NEED.**

29 **(4) (I) EACH LOCAL BOARD OF ELECTIONS SHALL USE A PROGRAM**
30 **PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL ADDRESS FOR ALL ELECTION-RELATED PURPOSES.**

(II) A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT MAY NOT USE THE SUBSTITUTE ADDRESS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S ADDRESS FOR:

1. VOTER REGISTRATION;

2. A CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY FILED UNDER § 5-301 OF THE ELECTION LAW ARTICLE; OR

3. CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER TITLE 13 OF THE ELECTION LAW ARTICLE.

(III) A LOCAL BOARD OF ELECTIONS MAY NOT MAKE A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S ADDRESS CONTAINED IN VOTER REGISTRATION, CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY, OR CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING RECORDS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION OR COPYING EXCEPT:

1. ON REQUEST BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PURPOSES;

2. AS DIRECTED BY A COURT ORDER TO DISCLOSE THE ADDRESS; AND

3. FOR A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT WHO IS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL, AS REQUIRED UNDER STATE ELECTION LAW.

(D) A RECORD OF A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER MAINTAINED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE OR A GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY IS NOT A PUBLIC RECORD WITHIN THE MEANING OF § 4-101 OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS ARTICLE.

(E) (1) A PERSON MAY NOT KNOWINGLY DISCLOSE A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL ADDRESS.

(2) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON BEHALF OF A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, MAY BRING AN ACTION FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SUBSECTION FOR:

(I) DECLARATORY RELIEF;

(II) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF; OR

(III) REASONABLE ATTORNEY'S FEES.

Article – Real Property

3–114.

(a) In this part the following words have the meanings indicated.

(d) “Address Confidentiality Program” means [the]:

(1) THE Address Confidentiality Program for survivors of threatened, attempted, or actual domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, harassment, or human trafficking administered by the Secretary under Title 7, Subtitle 3 of the State Government Article;

(2) THE PUBLIC SERVANT ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER TITLE 7, SUBTITLE 4 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE; and [the]

(3) THE Judicial Address Confidentiality Program administered by the Administrative Office of the Courts under Title 3, Subtitle 24 of the Courts Article.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.