



SB 234/HB 023 - SUPPORT
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Public Information Act – State and Local Agencies – Restrictions on Access

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee/House Judiciary Committee

January 28, 2021

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

As a Maryland resident for 46 years and on behalf of Maryland Against ICE Detention (MDAID), I adamantly support SB 234/HB 023 and urge this committee to report favorably on this legislation. MDAID is a statewide coalition of organizations and individuals striving to stop immigration detention as well as systems that contribute to detention and deportation. We are made up of over 60 organizations and over 200,000 individual members and members of those organizations.

The passage and implementation SB 234/HB 023 is important to our mission of stopping detention and deportation of immigrants, even more so during this pandemic, which detention worsens, increasing the hazard to those detained and to surrounding communities. In 2013, Maryland extended driving privileges to every qualified person regardless of immigration status, thus improving public safety and security by reducing unlicensed drivers. Soon after, ICE agents were reported to have started harassing and detaining undocumented residents, such as during the 2014 Catonsville raid. In 2020, the ICE officer who arrested and detained Jose Santos Quintero, a father of 5 children, indicated ICE located him from driver's license information. Several people picked up also indicated that the MVA was the only government agency with which they had shared personal information and addresses.

Such actions have once again increased immigrants' fears of being targeted and deported, and is discouraging them from getting driver's licenses. This bill would require ICE to obtain a warrant in order to access personal information from the MVA, thus ensuring undocumented immigrants could feel safe in getting licenses.

In addition, this bill would require data reporting on federal agencies requests for and receipt of personal information and use of facial recognition searches. ICE requests and searches affect all Marylanders, particularly as facial recognition can be inaccurate (more so with people of color) and thus can identify the wrong person and set off events leading to false arrests, detention or worse. SB 234/HB 23 will reduce the harm that ICE is able to inflict upon our immigrant neighbors, ensure they can get licenses which increases safety on the roads, and safeguard the information of all Marylanders from unwarranted access.

MDAID urges a favorable report on SB 234/HB 023.