

TESTIMONY ON SB234, RESTRICTING ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION
FOR THE JANUARY 28 HEARING OF THE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE
POSITION: FAVORABLE

SUBMITTED BY

Perry Beider
4011 Rickover Road
Silver Spring, MD 20902

I strongly support SB234, the “Driver Privacy Act.” It is necessary to avoid an unanticipated miscarriage of justice resulting from an otherwise sensible and valuable Maryland law.

As you know, the Maryland General Assembly extended driving privileges to every qualified person, regardless of immigration status, in 2013. That decision was made for the common-sense, public-safety purpose of avoiding having unlicensed drivers on the roads; it allows undocumented immigrants to drive under the same terms as everyone else.

Unfortunately, the federal Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agency is taking advantage of the law, and the cooperation of the Maryland MVA, to use MVA’s database as a tool to identify, detain, and deport undocumented Maryland residents. Clearly, this perverts the purpose of the 2013 law.

SB234 would not prevent Maryland databases from being accessed for purposes of criminal law enforcement, given a valid warrant from federal or state court.

The Judicial Proceedings Committee voted to approve this legislation last year; unfortunately, the early end of the session prevented it from being enacted into law. I trust that the committee will do the right thing again and approve the bill speedily, as the first step to passage by the General Assembly as a whole. There is no time to waste!

Thank you for your attention.