

TESTIMONY ON HB23, RESTRICTING ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION
FOR THE JANUARY 27 HEARING OF THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
POSITION: FAVORABLE

SUBMITTED BY

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I strongly support HB23, 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.

HB23 would not prevent Maryland databases from being accessed for purposes of criminal law enforcement, given a valid warrant from federal or state court.

Similar bills were introduced in 2018 and again last year, when it was one of the casualties of the early end to the legislative session. I hope that that experience demonstrates to the members of the Judiciary Committee that there is no time to waste in approving HB23, as the first step to passage by the General Assembly as a whole. Our undocumented neighbors deserve to know that the MVA will not repay them for doing the right thing (getting a license to drive) by exposing them to ICE’s prying eyes!

Thank you for your attention.