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Judiciary Committee

Subcommittees

Civil Law and Procedure
Family and Juvenile Law

Task Force to Study Crime
Classification and Penalties



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Unfavorable Testimony, SB839 Maryland Voluntary COVID-19 Vaccine Passport

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman and committee members:

SB839 is setting up a wholly new passport system in the declining days of the covid outbreak. This action is contrary to the movement of the entire country.

New York Mayor Eric Adams is rolling back New York City's COVID-19 vaccine passport requirements on March 7th, and announced, "Yes. I can't wait to get it done," according to the New York Post.

The risks and problems with this proposal are so numerous they overwhelm.

Let's start with the idea that this is a voluntary thing. Why would it be necessary for such a vaccine passport to be set up by the state of Maryland if it's voluntary? Couldn't any app company develop and market it for those wanting to have one? People could sign up, put their medical information in it and show it to anyone who wants to see it. As long as it is voluntary it is in the realm of private business. But why make it available through the State?

There is only ONE REASON this would be done by the state of Maryland. Because when the state wants it to be involuntary, or MANDATED, only the State has the power to make that happen, and it will have the full structure already there and ready to go.

So, if this passes you can *expect* that either in this pandemic or the next, Maryland *will mandate* vaccine passports be used to participate in Maryland society. That means you will not have a choice of whether to be vaccinated or not. Whether you have religious, philosophical, health or legal issues with any part of the process, you will either be vaccinated or not be allowed to participate in society.

So, to all of the communities who hesitated to take the current vaccines, including our minority communities and our religious community, **this can only be seen as an attack on you.**

Even MSNBC shows concern over vaccine passport flaws. In Tiffini Li's column "The Risks of Covid 'Vaccine Passports' are Scariest than You Might Think" she cautioned "they don't solve the glaring problem of vaccination inequality, and, perhaps most dangerously, they risk reinforcing a system of haves and have-nots when our poor and marginalized communities are already suffering disproportionately in the pandemic."

Li's MSNBC column goes on to highlight other problems, "Vaccination verification systems can collect and store the sensitive personal and health information of potentially millions of people. At minimum, a vaccine passport app will have to include personal information such as your name and contact information, as well as at least enough medical information to confirm that you have been vaccinated. To verify that information, a vaccine passport app is likely to have to interface with state vaccination registration databases or with medical records from health care providers. Any app that collects this much information is ripe for abuse... Furthermore, there are no guarantees of how user privacy will be protected. There are few legal limits to what data a vaccine passport app could collect, *and things get complicated if people feel forced to use the apps to re-enter society...* Even if a vaccine passport app suffered a major breach, consumers have legal rights in most states to be notified about data breaches only if leaks include financial information or Social Security numbers." (Emphasis added)

This nation felt strongly enough about the privacy of our individual health information that the federal government set up prohibitions via HIPPA laws that prevent those in medicine from sharing our health information. But, we are okay with handing this same information over to app companies who already abuse other personal information data collection privileges?

I am surprised that Sen. Rosapepe would bring a bill to this distinguished body that has the dangers this bill presents. Sen. Rosapepe isn't just a Senator and an investor, he was a United States Ambassador. Has it been so long ago that former Ambassador Rosapepe served in Romania and saw the destructive impact of population control? Has he forgotten how easily a population can be controlled by an oppressive government and how difficult it is to bring freedom back to that population? Sen. Rosapepe isn't just a Senator, an investor and a former Ambassador, he's also an author. Why would the man who co-wrote with his wife, **Dracula Is Dead: How Romanians Survived Communism, Ended It, and Emerged since 1989 as the New Italy**, be creating what could so easily be turned into a means to control the Maryland population and his own constituents?

Does SB839 have more to do with investments than supposed population protection? Companies that make covid testing and vaccinations are heavily benefitting from widespread government mandates and contracts. As the threat of covid fades into the background some companies may not want to see their hefty government contracts also fade. This app and its developers would certainly continue to benefit from covid and future health scares.

Who will benefit from the ongoing use of this app if the state passes its supposedly voluntary use? Investors and its corporate owners will. It won't be the general population that benefits. The

Maryland taxpayer will foot the bill, while its investors benefit financially. Maryland residents will bear the brunt of security and data breaches while investors and company developers will benefit from the personal information voluntarily, but unknowingly, handed over to them.

There is no upside to this bill, except for those who will make money from the app. For everyone else it is a slippery slope down.

I respectfully ask for an unfavorable report on SB839 Maryland Voluntary COVID-19 Vaccine Passport.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Cox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" and last name "Cox" clearly distinguishable.

Delegate Dan Cox, District 4
Frederick and Carroll Counties