



Testimony to the House Economic Matters Committee
HB 33: Consumer Protection-Online and Biometric Data Privacy
Position: Favorable

February 22, 2023

The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair
House Economic Matters Committee
Room 231, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
cc: Members, House Economic Matters

Honorable Chair Wilson and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

We are writing in support of HB 33 and urge a favorable report.

Biometric identifiers (palm, fingerprint, iris, voice, face) are increasingly being used by law enforcement, airports, property management firms, and employers. Currently there are few restrictions on how companies collect, analyze, store, share, or sell our personal biometric identifiers. Unlike a credit card, we can't get new biomarkers.

While some consumers may choose to use biometrics to, for example, open their smartphone with their fingerprint, it is their choice to do so for security and/or ease. In other cases, the individual may not be aware that their biometric data is being collected and stored.

HB 33 establishes that businesses that collect biometric data develop a written policy stating their retention of and process for destruction of biometric identifiers. HB 33 also requires individuals affirmative consent before a company can collect or use their biometric information, limits the disclosure and sharing of biometric information, and creates clarity around how this information may be collected, used, and stored. It also requires a report to the OAG should there be a breach of biometric data and makes violations of this act a violation of the Maryland Consumer Protection Act.

For all these reasons, we support HB 33 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive Director

