



**SB977 State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act)**

**Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

**February 19, 2025**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

---

The Honorable Senator William Smith, Chair  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights and equity for Maryland families through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

I am writing today to urge your favorable report on SB977, which would protect immigrant communities from data sharing to federal immigration authorities unless a valid warrant is presented

Through our direct services program, Economic Action has engaged with the immigrant community in Maryland for several years. One thing remains incredibly clear, immigrants contribute greatly to Maryland as community members and members of our workforce.

In recent years, the erosion of data privacy protections has led to increased fear and uncertainty within immigrant communities. The Maryland Data Privacy Act SB977 takes critical steps to restore trust by ensuring that state and local agencies, as well as law enforcement entities, are prohibited from sharing personal information, facial recognition data, and access to public facilities with federal immigration authorities unless a valid warrant is presented.

2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD · 21218 · 410-220-0494

[info@econaction.org](mailto:info@econaction.org) · [www.econaction.org](http://www.econaction.org)

Tax ID 52-2266235

Economic Action Maryland Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Through our Securing Older Adult Resources (SOAR) Program, our counselors work with low-income families and older adults to ensure they are able to receive necessary resources for economic success. In 2023-2024 17% of our SOAR clients were Latinx. Although we do not track documented status due to privacy concerns, we are deeply worried that without this bill, immigrants in our community will not seek the resources they need, particularly when it pertains to resources secured through SDAT.

Economic Action Maryland Fund stands with immigrant communities and supports the Maryland Data Privacy Act because it will:

1. **Limit Access to Databases and Facilities:** Law enforcement agencies and state or local government units must deny access to sensitive data and facilities to individuals seeking to enforce federal immigration law without a valid court-issued warrant.
2. **Protect Personal Information:** The Act prohibits the disclosure of personal data, photographs, and biometric information, such as facial recognition scans, to federal immigration authorities unless due legal processes are followed.
3. **Provide Accountability and Transparency:** Agencies must maintain records of all access requests and submit annual reports to the Attorney General and the General Assembly to ensure compliance and transparency.
4. **Ensure Enforcement and Penalties:** The Attorney General is empowered to enforce these protections, with civil penalties for violations and disciplinary actions for state employees who fail to comply.

This legislation is crucial not only for protecting the privacy of all Maryland residents but also for fostering trust between immigrant communities and public institutions. By clearly delineating the boundaries of federal immigration enforcement within our state, we promote the values of dignity, safety, and fairness.

In 2021, this legislature took action to protect immigrants and safeguard their sensitive data. We were in support of that bill for similar reasons that we support SB977, consumers should not live in fear of their personal data being bought, sold, or collected, particularly if that data could be used against them. Economic Action Maryland Fund once again calls on this legislature to act.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>[2021, MGA HB23](#)



For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB977.

Thank you,

Zoe Gallagher

Policy Associate

2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD · 21218 · 410-220-0494

[info@econaction.org](mailto:info@econaction.org) · [www.econaction.org](http://www.econaction.org)

Tax ID 52-2266235

Economic Action Maryland Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.