Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 977

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

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

February 19, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marjorie Simon. I am a resident of District 11B. Along with others from my synagogue,
Chizuk Amuno Congregation and Schools, I have been helping to resettle Afghan newcomers since
February 2022. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 977- State and Local Agencies -
Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data
Privacy Act).

In recent years, the erosion of data privacy protections has led to increased fear and uncertainty within
immigrant communities. The Maryland Data Privacy Act, SB 977, 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.

The family I am helping has supplied personal information when applying for government services for
which they are eligible such as Medicaid and public library cards. They should not feel they are putting
themselves at risk by sharing this information with government agencies. Thanks to the 2021 Driver
Privacy Act, they did not have those concerns when applying for a driver's license or Maryland State ID.
We should all have the same protections for data privacy regardless of the state or local agency with
which we are interacting.

I, Marjorie Simon, stand with immigrant communities and supports the Maryland Data Privacy Act
because it will:

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.

1. **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.
2. **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.

3. **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.

In 2021 this legislature passed the 2021 Driver Privacy Act which protected immigrants and safeguarded the sensitive data in the MVA databases. Once again, I call on the legislature to act.

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.

I, Marjorie Simon, urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 977.