

Monday, February 17, 2025



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA de Maryland, an immigration advocacy and assistance organization based in Maryland. I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am testifying in **support of SB0977, the Maryland Data Privacy Act.**

President Trump's cruel, racist, and xenophobic attacks on immigrants has continued in his second administration. It is incumbent upon Maryland to protect the people that he is dedicated to demonizing: our friends, family members, and neighbors, hard-working people who help build our communities. They don't deserve to live in fear.

In Maryland and nationwide, federal immigration authorities have a history of abusing state-held databases containing personal information in order to help them target immigrants. In Maryland, after Maryland allowed undocumented immigrants to apply for driver's licenses in 2013, ICE began using MVA data in this way. This is a vicious and counterproductive attempt to force immigrants to live in the shadows when they would otherwise readily adhere to local laws and regulations that keep everyone safe.

In 2021, the General Assembly passed the Driver Privacy Act over the governor's veto to shut down this tactic. However, many other agencies in Maryland maintain databases of personal information that can include immigrants, and those databases are still open to ICE scrutiny. With the federal government on a mission to terrorize, imprison, and deport as many immigrants as possible, we must act to close this loophole in our data privacy.

SB0977 would ban all Maryland state and local government agencies from sharing access to their databases of sensitive personal information, or information taken from those

databases, with federal immigration authorities unless those authorities have a *real* warrant, signed by a judge, authorizing their access to private information.

In addition, SB0977 seeks to fight back against the president's revocation of the "sensitive locations" policy by requiring government agencies to deny access to their buildings and facilities to immigration authorities unless they have a *real* warrant signed by a judge. While this does not provide complete protection to people attempting to abide by local laws and retain access to crucial resources and services, it at least makes it more difficult for ICE to target local and state government facilities for raids/general enforcement actions.

I do not want Maryland to use our resources to help President Trump conduct his racist, cruel anti-immigrant campaign. We must stand up for our friends, family, and neighbors by refusing to be complicit in his xenophobia. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in **support** of **SB0977, the Maryland Data Privacy Act**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
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