



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 977/HB 1431

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

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee **OR** House Judiciary Committee

February 19, 2025, OR February 27, 2025

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

HB: Dear Honorable Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee,

Anya Bobrowski/Intern with CASAs policy team is pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of **SB 977 /HB 1431- State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act).**

Statement of Purpose

CASA, a community-based organization has been advocating for many years for a change in legislature in the Maryland General Assembly. CASA's mission is to work with the immigrant community to ensure their voices are heard. CASA is very committed to the immigrant community and is moving forward with meaningful immigration reform in Maryland.

Something that inspires me to support this issue, is that I believe that individual data and information privacy should be protected under SB977/HB1431. This will ensure the safety of one's personal information and data information based on their status in the state of Maryland. An individual should not be scrutinized or have their data and personal information used against them depending on their immigration status. I believe that the concept of using someone's data information and personal information against them is completely unfair and there should be restrictions on whether state or local agencies should be able to use data and private information against an individual. Thinking about it in a sense, would you want someone to be able to access your private data information without probable cause? If there is no probable cause why access the information at all?

Something that drives me to protect sensitive locations as well as protecting data privacy, is that I believe that if you are in the country legally or illegally, there should be protections in place. This does not mean in any circumstances an individual is a criminal. People come to the United States to find a better life, and to work, while also providing for their families. You never know someone's story and how they got here, but being able to protect these communities and individuals from ICE and protecting them from having their private data searched seems like a very beneficial cause that will protect families and individuals from being targeted based on their status.

Background

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 /HB 1431** 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.

Currently, clients and members of the community, as well as members of CASA feel as if they are not being protected by laws put in place by the Maryland General Assembly. Many are afraid to attend school, go to the hospital, go to the store, courthouses, etc. Because ICE enforcement officers are targeting these sensitive locations. Now that data privacy protections have led to increased fear within the immigrant community, members of the community may feel unsafe to share private information with said locations, (schools, hospitals, law enforcement, courthouses, etc). This fear of protective uncertainty can put stress on a lot of individuals as well as make them lose trust in the system that is supposed to protect them from the issues being addressed. Data privacy protections would raise more certainty and allow the community to feel as if their private data information is not being used against them as well as being able to share private information with people of importance, but without these protections, individuals can not do so.

Anya Bobrowski/Intern with CASAs Policy Team 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. **CASA**, once again calls on this legislature to act.¹

I, Anya Bobrowski **urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 977/HB 1431.**

¹[2021. MGA HB23](#)