

Date of Hearing : February 19, 2025

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Testimony on (SB 977/HB 1431)- Position: Favorable
Protecting Sensitive Location Act

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,
I am pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 977/HB 1431- State and Local Agencies-Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law- Restriction on Access to Information. I am a Family Physician in Towson Maryland. Our practice sees a larger number of immigrants ,many from Spanish speaking countries. We have many visits for newborns and other pediatric visits.

In recent years, the erosion of data privacy protections has led to increase fear and uncertainty within these 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 present. This legislation would help maintain our patients critical ability to seek medical care, both for much needed preventative care as well as sick visits. Children are overall quite vulnerable and may need immediate attention if sick. They are innocent victims of politics. I stand with immigrant communities and support 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. Protect Personal Information : The Act prohibits the disclosure of personal data, photographs, and biometrics information, such as facial recognition scans, to federal immigration authorities unless due legal processes are followed. Provide Accountability and Transparency: Agencies must maintain records of all access requests and submit annual reports to the Attorney General Assembly to ensure compliance and transparency. 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 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. I, once again call on this legislature to act . I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 977/ HB 131.

Luisa Massari, M.D.

