

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

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

Barbara Schaffer is pleased to offer a **favorable testimony in strong support of SB 977 State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act).**

My name is Barbara Schaffer, I am a resident of Rockville, MD and reside in MD District 17. The present political climate and 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.

As a member of Jews United for Justice and as a concerned citizen, I stand 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.

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

Respectfully,

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