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**Senate Bill 977 – State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law -
Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act)
Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 19, 2025**

FAVORABLE

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents over 9,000 employees of Baltimore City Public Schools, including teachers, paraprofessionals, school secretaries, counselors, librarians, clinicians, transportation aides, and school support staff. Our members are on the frontlines of public education everyday, and strive to educate, support and develop Baltimore City’s young people. The Baltimore Teachers Union is writing in strong support of SB 977 and we request that the committee issue a favorable report.

SB 977 would prevent federal immigration enforcement agencies from accessing personal information, data systems, and facilities in Maryland without a valid warrant. This legislation is critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of our immigrant students, families, and community members as they go about their daily lives.

In our schools, we see firsthand how fear of immigration enforcement affects children and their families. When families are afraid that a routine interaction with a school, hospital, or public institution might result in their information being shared with immigration authorities, it creates a climate of distrust and anxiety. Children cannot focus on learning if they are worried about coming home to find a parent missing. Parents hesitate to engage with schools or seek essential services, even when those services are critical to their children’s education and well-being.

Aggressive immigration enforcement—especially when conducted without proper judicial oversight—is fundamentally contrary to the history and values of our nation. The United States has long been heralded as a land of opportunity, built and strengthened by immigrants from all over the world. Yet, the enforcement tactics we see today are rooted in racist and xenophobic ideologies, disproportionately targeting Black and Brown immigrant communities. These tactics sow fear, division, and instability in communities that contribute to Maryland’s growth and prosperity.

Immigrant families in Maryland are our neighbors, our coworkers, and, for us, our students. Our students are future business owners, caregivers, educators, and community leaders who enrich the cultural and economic fabric of our state. Our students’ families deserve to go about their lives—whether dropping their children off at school, attending a parent-teacher conference, or seeking medical care—without fear of harassment or detention.

By passing SB 977, Maryland has the opportunity to take a firm stand in defense of the dignity and safety of immigrant communities. This legislation provides necessary protections while upholding the rule of law by ensuring that any enforcement action requires a valid, judicially approved warrant.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 977. In doing so, you will affirm Maryland's commitment to justice, fairness, and the principle that all residents deserve to live, work, and learn without fear.