**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB977**
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

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

My name is Michelle Mazurek and I live in Silver Spring, in District 20. I write to offer **a favorable testimony** in **strong support** of **SB977 - State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act).**

As a computer science professor who has spent 15 years researching digital security and privacy, I study professionally the importance of privacy rights to healthy societies, and the detrimental chilling effects that privacy violations can have on communities and individuals. Specifically in the case of immigrant communities in Maryland, erosion of data privacy protections has increased fear and uncertainty, and inhibited community members from working with state agencies that provide vital services.

I have seen these effects firsthand, not just as a privacy professional, but as a neighbor and a mom. My daughter's elementary school has a large population of immigrants and children of immigrants, and I know the fear that immigrant families are living with, which impacts people's willingness to send their children to school as well as their ability to access food assistance, social services, and medical care. It is heartbreaking to see these effects in my community.

Further, as the granddaughter of immigrants, refugees, and Holocaust survivors, I benefited from the lives my grandparents were able to build in the U.S. They started their lives over, starting with almost nothing, in the 1940s and 50s. Today's immigrants deserve the same chance to build new lives here, raise their families, and contribute to our community, and they deserve to do so without fear.

SB977 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.

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.

In 2021, this legislature took action to protect immigrants and safeguard their sensitive data. I once again call on this legislature to act.[1]

With my **strongest conviction, I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB977.**

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[1] 2021, MGA HB23