

Feb 19, 2025
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TESTIMONY ON SB 977/HB 143 | POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee

FROM: Toby Ditz

My name is Toby Ditz, and I have lived in Baltimore City's District 40 for over almost forty years. This testimony is **insupport of sb977**.

I am deeply committed to this legislation partly because I am the grandchild of Jewish immigrants. My maternal grandmother, Helen, emigrated in 1919 from Russia in the midst of civil war in the company of her mother and younger sister; they fled across the closing Polish border to Amsterdam and then entered the US through Ellis Island. Had they tried to come here only ten years later, after US immigration policy choked off the flow of immigrants from Eastern Europe (and elsewhere around the world), I doubt I would be here today. I am profoundly grateful they made it.

The gates of immigration once again opened after 1965, but we are now in the midst of an era of backlash. President Trump has now promised mass arrest and deportations. This includes seizure of data on our immigrant residents from state agencies.

Since 2021, this legislature has worked to protect sensitive personal data. The Maryland Data Privacy Act continues this tradition by directing state agencies and local law enforcement officers to share Personal data, including data based on biometrics, with federal immigration enforcement officers only if the latter obtains a court ordered warrant. Their data requests must also be limited to what the warrant designates.

This proposed legislation offers common sense protection of our residents and correctly delineates the extent and limits on cooperation of state agencies and local law enforcement officers with federal immigration agents.

.Let's continue our tradition of protecting the privacy rights of all Marylanders.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB977.