



## Testimony for the House Judiciary Committee

March 26, 2025

### SB 977 – Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law – Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act)

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#### FAVORABLE

The ACLU of Maryland strongly supports SB 977 – the Maryland Data Privacy Act – which seeks to prevent state and local government entities from sharing private information about Marylanders who are immigrants without a valid warrant issued by a federal or state court. The bill also extends these prohibitions to state and local contractors and grant recipients.

SB 977 provides critical safeguards against loopholes that entities can take advantage of to obtain personal immigration for the purposes of immigration enforcement. Data brokers hold tremendously detailed information about virtually every person in the country, including information about people's addresses, financial transactions, relationships, and detailed location from tracking people's phones and cars. Data brokers are largely unregulated and aggregate and make all of this sensitive information available for purchase. Immigration authorities are able to simply buy it without any court oversight or transparency, circumventing due process and accountability. For example, researchers have uncovered ICE's purchase of detailed cell phone location information and phone, water, electricity, and other utility records.

The harms of widespread immigration enforcement and mass deportation are well documented and include disrupting communities, ripping families apart, and causing widespread panic and fear. In fact, a 2022 report on 287(g) programs found that instead of increasing safety, local law enforcement collaborating with ICE to enforce immigration law actually did the reverse, having a negative impact on public safety and public health.<sup>1</sup> Dragnet enforcement and local involvement creates an atmosphere where immigrant residents are less likely to report crimes or serve as witnesses, making everyone less safe. Maryland should not be

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<sup>1</sup> License to Abuse: How ICE's 287(g) Program Empowers Racist Sheriffs and Civil Rights Violations. (2022). American Civil Liberties Union.  
<https://www.aclu.org/publications/license-abuse-how-ices-287g-program-empowers-racist-sheriffs>

expending our limited resources and capacity to be involved in these enforcement actions and instead focus on tactics that are shown to improve communities and public safety.

Maryland has long recognized the importance of creating a welcoming environment and supporting immigrant families and individuals in our community. In 2013, the state extended driving privileges to all Marylanders regardless of immigration status. In this national moment, when federal actors move to terrorize communities and unregulated agencies access sensitive data with complete disregard for privacy rights, it is our duty to protect the sensitive data being collected and maintained by the state.

Not only should Marylanders be able to control who has access to their data, but the threat of widespread dragnet immigration sweeps and the rhetoric around mass deportation at the national level compels us to call on state and local governments to stop sharing personal information of residents with ICE.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on SB 977.