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TESTIMONY ON - FAVORABLE SB 977

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

TO: Chair Clippinger and Vice Chair Bartlett and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Carol Stern

My name is Carol Stern, and I am testifying in favor of, as a resident of Montgomery County's District 16 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda.

My sacred text and tradition teach us to welcome the stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. Leviticus 19:34 explicitly instructs us to treat the immigrant in our land the same as native citizens. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan wrote "teach us to respect the integrity of every human soul be it that of a friend or stranger, child or adult." When we are working to reform our immigration justice system, we must demand that it operates in accordance with these deeply held Jewish beliefs.

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 and third-party data brokers, are prohibited from sharing personal information with governmental entities for the purposes of immigration enforcement unless a valid warrant is presented.

SB 977 provides critical safeguards against loopholes that entities can take advantage of to obtain personal information 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.¹

The State of Maryland must take a stand and do everything it can to protect our immigrant residents, who pay taxes, work hard for our communities, and are a vibrant part of our society. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB977.**

¹ [New Records Detail DHS Purchase and Use of Vast Quantities of Cell Phone Location Data | ACLU](#)