

This is to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of HB 1431- State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act).

I live in Greenbelt, Maryland, where over 4,000 residents are immigrants without documentation. These are my neighbors, who contribute economically, socially, and culturally to our community. They deserve respect and protection from those would see them as problems rather than assets.

In recent years, the erosion of data privacy protections has led to increased fear and uncertainty within immigrant communities. The Maryland Data Privacy Act, HB1431, 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.

Access to sensitive data and facilities requires a valid court-issued warrant. Personal information cannot be shared with federal immigration authorities without due legal process. 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.

My immigrant neighbors need reassurance from the State of Maryland that they are valued and respected.

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

I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1431.

Laura Bonkosky
19 Ridge Rd, Unit T
Greenbelt, MD 20770