

Committee: House Judiciary Committee

Testimony: HB1431 State and Local Agencies—Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law—Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act)

Submitting Susan Tafler

Position: FAVORABLE

Hearing Date: February 27, 2025

Dear Chair Luke Clippinger, Vice Chair Sandy Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Susan Tafler and I am a resident of Odenton, District 21. I am submitting this testimony urging the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1431. State and Local Agencies—Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law—Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act) will stop ICE from accessing state databases, records, or information without a valid warrant, thereby ensuring that state data is not misused. It will also require state agencies to document all ICE access requests and report to the General Assembly and Attorney General, thereby creating transparency and ensuring compliance with the law.

I am the granddaughter of four immigrants from Eastern Europe who came to America for freedom from forced conscription and freedom from arrest for unionizing activities as well as better economic opportunities and safety from antisemitic pogroms. As a Jew guided by our sacred texts, I am mindful that the Bible commands us: “When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The sojourners who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love them as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19: 33-34).

The 2021 Driver Privacy Act was a vital step, blocking ICE from warrantless access to MVA data. But gaps remain, and other state agencies still hold sensitive information that ICE could exploit. The Maryland Data Privacy Act strengthens Maryland’s protections, ensuring that no state agency data can be weaponized against immigrant communities. Our state agencies should not be complicit in aggressive federal enforcement and overreach. By enacting HB1431, Maryland will be stronger in protecting the privacy, dignity, and safety of all residents.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 1431.