Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 977

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

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee
March 24, 2025
SB: Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

The National Domestic Workers Alliance is pleased to offer **a favorable testimony** in **strong support** of **SB 977- State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act).**

The National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) works to win the respect, recognition, and labor rights of the nearly 2.5 million domestic workers—nannies, house cleaners, and homecare workers—who play a crucial role in caring for our families and homes. Domestic workers perform vital tasks that enable all other work to happen. They are the caregivers who look after our children, the cleaners who maintain our homes, and the care providers who help our loved ones live with dignity and independence. While the National Domestic Workers Alliance is a national organization, our DMV chapter is a local, membership-based organization covering the geographical area of Washington DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

Most domestic workers are at the heart of some of the nation's most significant issues due to their identities and roles: they are primarily women—many of whom are women of color, immigrants, mothers, and low-wage earners. Their lives are directly impacted by policies that shape the future of our economy, democracy, and society. And unfortunately, right now, many domestic workers are facing uncertainty and fear due to the federal attacks on immigrant communities.

We are hearing from many of our immigrant members in Maryland that they are living in fear daily. Many of our members have lived here for multiple decades without a path to a legal status. They have had children that were born in this country, they have taken care of other families through their professions- yet, now they feel more vulnerable than ever due to their immigration statuses.

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, are prohibited from sharing personal information, facial recognition data, and access to public facilities with federal immigration authorities unless a valid warrant is presented.

If state and local agencies have the protections to safeguard sensitive data from ICE, our members will feel a bit of peace in our state where many of them have lived and contributed to for decades.

NDWA DMV Chapter stands with immigrant communities and supports the Maryland Data Privacy Act

because it will:

1. **Limit Access to Databases and Facilities:** Law enforcement agencies and state or local government units must deny access to sensitive data and facilities to individuals seeking to enforce federal immigration law without a valid court-issued warrant.
2. **Protect Personal Information:** The Act prohibits the disclosure of personal data, photographs, and biometric information, such as facial recognition scans, to federal immigration authorities unless due legal processes are followed.
3. **Provide Accountability and Transparency:** Agencies must maintain records of all access requests and submit annual reports to the Attorney General and the General Assembly to ensure compliance and transparency.
4. **Ensure Enforcement and Penalties:** The Attorney General is empowered to enforce these protections, with civil penalties for violations and disciplinary actions for state employees who fail to comply.

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.

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

NDWA DMV Chapter **urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 977.**