

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1431

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

House Judiciary Committee
February 27, 2025

SB: Dear Honorable Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee,

I am offering a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 977/HB 1431- State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act).

I am a resident of Howard County and involved as a volunteer with the Interfaith Refugee Committee, a volunteer “ambassador” for Global Refuge in Baltimore and a resettlement team at my church and a Maryland Lutheran network. I am involved directly with resettlement of three families in Baltimore and Howard counties. I have volunteered with Luminus which works primarily with immigrants from Mexico and Latin America.

I am very concerned about allowing access to privacy data for purposes of enforcement of immigration law. Frankly, this intrusion into personal data reminds me of the repressive governments from which two of the families with whom I work have fled. This bill would help restore trust in our data privacy, the rule of law and prevent a further erosion of trust in our government.

Allowing access to personal data in a wide swath of the government would prevent people from getting access to needed services, the use of sensitive services, and the like. Immigration Enforcement officials should not have broad access to this data. This sets up a dangerous precedence.

This act would prevent access to such data without a warrant. It would protect critical information and photos for people here seeking asylum, who may indeed have other vulnerable family members remaining in their country of origin. Many of the Afghan refugees are very worried about retaliation by the Taliban of their family members.

Thank you very much.

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