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An agency of The Associated

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

House Bill 1431 - State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act)

Judiciary Committee

February 27, 2025

SUPPORT

Background: If enacted, House Bill 1431 would alter provisions of the law so that a law enforcement agency or unit of State or local government would deny access to certain databases with personal information, facial recognition data, and access to public facilities to federal immigration authorities unless a valid warrant is presented.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) represents The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies and programs. Immigration has been a central element of the Jewish experience since biblical times. The American Jewish Community has long advocated for fair and just immigration and refugee policies, in accordance with the biblical teaching to *welcome the stranger*. To that end, Maryland should be a welcoming state to those who want to be here. Those facing deportation are in a dire position and are often facing the prospect of having to leave a place they have called home for many years.

Further, many of our ancestors were stopped in the street for their papers, harassed by local law enforcement, and forced to register in a database of fellow Jews. While these policies were framed as security measures, they resulted in irreversible damage that cannot be forgotten. Maryland *must not* repeat this history by targeting the community members it swears to serve and protect.

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on HB1431.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.