



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 27, 2025

HB1431

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

Judiciary Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 1431**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

The Maryland Data Privacy Act seeks to strengthen protections for immigrant communities by restricting state and local agencies from granting access to certain databases for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration law. Under this legislation, law enforcement agencies and units of state or local government are required to deny access to personal data when such requests are made by individuals or entities seeking to enforce federal immigration policies, except under specific circumstances. Additionally, the Act mandates that the Attorney General oversees and enforces compliance, ensuring that state agencies do not facilitate unjust immigration enforcement practices. Furthermore, any state employee found in violating these provisions will be subject to disciplinary action, reinforcing the seriousness of these protections.

House Bill 1431 aligns with the principles of human dignity, subsidiarity, and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. Immigrants, especially those facing legal uncertainty, are among the most vulnerable populations, often subject to exploitation, fear, and separation from their families. Ensuring data privacy safeguards is a matter of protecting human dignity by preventing unjust targeting and deportations that break families apart and harm communities. Additionally, this bill upholds the principle of subsidiarity, as it reinforces the role of state and local governments in prioritizing the well-being of their residents over federal enforcement measures that may create fear and distrust.

By limiting state and local cooperation in federal immigration enforcement through data access restrictions, this Act promotes the common good and fosters trust between immigrant communities and local institutions. It ensures that individuals can access essential services, report crimes, and engage with their communities without fear of exposure to immigration enforcement. This legislation ultimately supports a more just and compassionate society where all individuals, regardless of status, are treated with dignity and respect.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 1431**.