

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1431
State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions
on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act)

House Judiciary Committee

February 27, 2025

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

My name is Dominique Ashen PhD, CRNP. I am a nurse practitioner providing preventive cardiovascular care for undocumented immigrants in Baltimore. I am pleased to offer **a favorable testimony in strong support of HB 1431- State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act).**

As a nurse practitioner I want to protect personal and medical data for my patients, which are private and sensitive. I want to ensure that this private and sensitive data cannot be used to target or detain my patients and separate them from their families.

If medical data is obtained by ICE, it could compromise my patient's safety, disrupt their medical services, and create fear in them so that they never come back to the clinic for the medical care they need and deserve as human beings.

In recent years, the erosion of data privacy protections has led to increased fear and uncertainty within immigrant communities. The Maryland Data Privacy Act, HB1431, 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.

Access to sensitive data and facilities requires a valid court-issued warrant. Personal information cannot be shared with federal immigration authorities without due legal process. 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. I call on this legislature to act.

I, Dominique Ashen PhD, CRNP, urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1431.