

Date of Hearing: March 26, 1:00 PM
Linda Rae Bergofsky
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TESTIMONY ON SB 977- POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Linda Bergofsky

I am a resident of District 15. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 977, State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act)

By way of background, I am a member of Oseh Shalom synagogue in Laurel, MD and serve as the chair of its Social Justice committee. I am also a substitute teacher in Montgomery County Public Schools, a member of Jews United for Justice, and an ally of CASA, through which I advocate for protecting the rights and privacy of my immigrant neighbors. I'm writing to urge you to support SB 977 and extend the protections afforded by the 2021 Driver Privacy Act. Without additional protections, state-held personal data could inadvertently become available to ICE, thus, breaking public trust, and placing our communities at risk.

The Trump Administration has declared an immoral and illegal war on immigrants, and in doing so has effectively declared war on all of us. Although ICE is currently blocked from warrantless access to MVA data, gaps remain as long as other State agencies with sensitive information can be exploited. This bill ensures that no State agency data can be weaponized against immigrant communities. It would stop ICE from accessing state databases, records, or information without a valid warrant and requires State agencies to document all ICE access requests and report them to the General Assembly and Attorney General. This creates transparency and ensures compliance with the law.

As evidenced by DOGE's assault on Federal databases, Trump's obsession with obtaining information about immigrants is a Trojan horse. We must ensure that all Marylanders' sensitive data is shielded from unwarranted federal surveillance and misuse. Maryland faces a critical choice: uphold the privacy and trust of its residents or risk complicity in aggressive Federal enforcement. This bill ensures that state agencies are a shield, not a conduit, for unwarranted Federal overreach. By enacting this legislation, Maryland can lead the nation in protecting the privacy, dignity, and safety of all residents.

This legislation is required because of the exigent circumstances we face from an immoral and out-of-control Federal war against immigrants. **I stand with my immigrant neighbors and I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 977.**