



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 977/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,

Doctors for Camp Closure, Maryland chapter is pleased to offer 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).

Doctors for Camp Closure is a national organization. Our Maryland chapter is our local chapter. Our mission is to advocate for justice and humane treatment of immigrants. As doctors we know that there is no amount of time in an ICE jail which is healthy for our patients. We know that healthy families are families that can remain together. We know how critical it is for our families that family members not be deported.

In recent years, the erosion of data privacy protections has led to increased fear and uncertainty within immigrant communities. The Maryland Data Privacy Act SB 977 /HB 1431 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.

Our immigrant patients must have their privacy protected. This legislation is critical for our patients' welfare.

If our patients' privacy is not protected then they are at a much higher risk of deportation. There is nothing that is worse for our patients' health than the fear of and then actual deportation. Once a family member is deported, the family members suffer physically and psychologically. Children lose their ability to thrive and function in school. They regress emotionally which then takes a physical toll on their bodies. Families lose a wage earner so they suffer economically.

Doctors for Camp Closure Maryland chapter stands with immigrant communities and supports the Maryland Data Privacy Act because it will:

Limit Access to Databases and Facilities: Law enforcement agencies and state or local government units must deny access to sensitive data and facilities to individuals seeking to enforce federal immigration law without a valid court-issued warrant.

Protect Personal Information: The Act prohibits the disclosure of personal data, photographs, and biometric information, such as facial recognition scans, to federal immigration authorities unless due legal processes are followed.

Provide Accountability and Transparency: Agencies must maintain records of all access requests and submit annual reports to the Attorney General and the General Assembly to ensure compliance and transparency.

Ensure Enforcement and Penalties: The Attorney General is empowered to enforce these protections, with civil penalties for violations and disciplinary actions for state employees who fail to comply.

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. Doctor for Camp Closure Maryland chapter once again calls on this legislature to act.

Doctors for Camp Closure, Maryland chapter urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 977/HB 1431.

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