

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

Hearing date: February 27, 2025

From: Pam Stuckey, Kensington, Maryland

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

I live in D18 and am pleased to offer **a favorable testimony in strong support of HB 1431, the Maryland Data Privacy Act**. I'm a retired RN who has been an immigrant advocate for many years. I'm no longer caring for patients myself but I dedicated my life to patient care and those values are still the core of my ethics. Over the years, each year in fact, I saw the connection between the patient and health care providers weaken. In today's political climate many 'authorities' and politicians are more than happy for immigrants to feel and be more scared. Trust was the key to success in everything I did as a nurse. The patient needed to feel safe. And increased anxiety could lead to worse outcomes. And more importantly ... every patient needed to be treated equally. In order for health care providers today to act ethically and morally we need to be ensuring privacy for our neighbors in the immigrant community.

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. *[Again, I think not every letter needs identical text blocks—so feel free to omit or shorten as needed for space, or move a key talking point to the final "I urge" sentence, just don't change/replace the general talking points.]*

In 2021, this legislature took action to protect immigrants and safeguard their sensitive MVA data, via HB23. I once again call on this legislature to act.

I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1431.