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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 Devin Krol, I am a resident in Stevenson, District 11. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB1431, (Maryland Data Privacy Act). A little background about me, I was born in Baltimore County and as a child attended Jewish day schools in the county. My father was born and raised in Baltimore City and attended schools in Northwest Baltimore and Pimlico. His parents were Holocaust survivors, David and Rose Krol; they settled in Baltimore City and then the county when they arrived as refugees. My grandparents met and got married in a displaced persons camp after the Holocaust while waiting for an American sponsor in order to come to here. My mother immigrated to Baltimore City from Argentina when she was just 6 years old and finally obtained her green card when she was a young adult, at around 20- quite the feat! As any immigrant to the USA will tell you it often takes years, even decades, to get a green card! My family background and Jewish education gave me a deep sense of justice and civil action, a need to repair the world called Tikkun Olam. This has led me to working towards immigrant justice; we must protect all members of our Maryland community regardless of their country of origin or documentation status.

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

I stand with immigrant communities and support the Maryland Data Privacy Act because it will limit access to databases and facilities, protect personal information, provide accountability and transparency, and ensure enforcement and penalties for state employees who fail to comply.

People are too scared to go to school, the hospital, or even to report a crime committed out of fear that they might have their information shared with ICE and subsequently be deported. Having any of our neighbors live in this constant fear is unacceptable, we must make a stand to

protect one another. 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 am calling on this legislature to act. I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1431. Thank you.