

**Testimony on House Bill 711 – Favorable
HB711 – Data Privacy – Consumer Data, Public Records, and Message Switching System (Data
Privacy Act)**

Economic Matters Committee

February 24, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Valerie Hodge-Williams, and I am a resident of Garrett County, Maryland. I am writing in support of **HB711 – the Data Privacy Act**.

I was an immigrant brought over from the UK for my skills as a physical therapist. It was of benefit to me and Maryland that I could be licensed as a professional. I never faced the fear that my personal information from the Maryland Licensing Board could be shared for any other purpose than confirmation of my qualifications.

It is essential that immigrants can obtain skills and licenses, both to improve their lives and to support our community as qualified professionals. It benefits the state to have more qualified, registered trade persons and professionals paying annual fees and taxes. We need to protect Maryland's registration & licensing trade data from misuse so all our skilled trade workers can be compliant and safe as officially licensed Maryland professionals. Fear of data sharing should not undermine participating in our important state licensing systems.

For this and other reasons I support these commonsense reforms that ensure Maryland's privacy laws live up to their intended purpose. When personal data is misused, everyone's privacy is at risk. State agencies should be a shield, not a conduit, for ICE. I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report on HB711**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.