

February 24, 2026

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TESTIMONY ON HB711 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

**Data Privacy - Consumer Data, Public Records, and Message Switching System
(Data Privacy Act)**

TO: Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and members of the Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Jerry Kickenson, on behalf of Jews United for Justice

My name is Jerry Kickenson. I am a resident of District 18 and a volunteer leader with Jews United for Justice. JUFJ organizes 6,000 Jewish Marylanders and allies to advocate for social, racial, and economic justice at the state and local level. On behalf of JUFJ, I am submitting this testimony in support of HB711, Data Privacy - Consumer Data, Public Records, and Message Switching System (Data Privacy Act).

Jewish law and tradition lean strongly towards privacy. We read in Proverbs 11:13: “A base fellow gives away secrets, but a trustworthy soul keeps a confidence”. Rabbi Gershom ben Judah (c. 960–1040 CE), known as Me’or Hagolah (“Light of the Exile”), instituted a *cherem* (ban) against reading another person's private mail or correspondence without authorization. While Jewish law always had exceptions for when violating privacy is necessary to prevent serious harm, violating privacy for the purposes of civil immigration enforcement does not rise to that standard.

HB711 amends existing law to explicitly specify that the privacy of sensitive information about Maryland residents held by the state shall not be violated solely for the purpose of immigration enforcement, whether directly or after sale to a private entity.

These changes will help protect my neighbors from Ethiopia and my long time friend from El Salvador, as well as tens of thousands of other Maryland residents, from unnecessary intrusion of their privacy for no reasonable purpose. Overreaching and overly violent federal immigration enforcement should not be abetted in any way by the state of Maryland.

HB711 is consistent with my Jewish values and, I believe, the values of the majority of Marylanders. **On behalf of JUFJ, I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB711.**