

(Bill Number HB711) _FAV_MJPA_Remer

Testimony in Support of the Maryland Data Privacy Act (H.R. 711)

[Stew Remer / Maryland Just Power Alliance]

February 20, 2026

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

My name is **Stew Remer** and I am a long-time resident of Montgomery County and a member of AIM, and the Maryland Just Power Alliance. I am writing in support of **HB711 – the Data Privacy Act**. I write today to respectfully counter several common arguments raised in opposition to this legislation and to affirm why strong data privacy protections are both necessary and beneficial for Maryland residents and businesses alike.

1. Claim: “The law will burden businesses, especially small businesses.”

Response:

The Maryland Data Privacy Act is carefully designed to apply primarily to companies that collect and process large amounts of personal data. Most small businesses are either exempt or subject to scaled obligations.

Moreover, the cost of *not* protecting consumer data is far greater:

- Data breaches are expensive and damaging to business reputation.
- Consumers are increasingly choosing companies they trust with their data.
- A clear, consistent legal framework reduces long-term compliance uncertainty.

Rather than a burden, this law creates a level playing field and encourages responsible innovation.

2. Claim: “It will stifle innovation and economic growth.”

Response:

Strong privacy protections and innovation are not mutually exclusive—they reinforce each other. States and regions with robust privacy laws have continued to see thriving tech sectors.

Privacy legislation:

- Builds consumer trust, which is essential for digital commerce

- Encourages companies to adopt modern, secure data practices
- Positions Maryland as a leader in ethical technology

Innovation that depends on unchecked data exploitation is neither sustainable nor aligned with public expectations.

3. Claim: “Existing laws are sufficient.”

Response:

Current protections are fragmented and outdated. They do not adequately address:

- The scale of modern data collection
- The complexity of data sharing ecosystems
- The use of sensitive data such as location, health, and biometric information

The Maryland Data Privacy Act fills these gaps by:

- Giving consumers meaningful rights (access, deletion, correction)
- Requiring transparency in data practices
- Limiting the use of sensitive data without consent

Without comprehensive legislation, consumers remain vulnerable.

4. Claim: “Consumers don’t really care about data privacy.”

Response:

Survey after survey shows that Americans are deeply concerned about how their data is collected and used. What they often lack is:

- Clear information
- Real choices
- Enforceable rights

This law empowers Maryland residents with practical tools to control their personal information—something they overwhelmingly support.

5. Claim: “Compliance will be too complex.”

Response:

The Act aligns with widely adopted frameworks and laws in other states, making compliance more—not less—manageable for companies already operating across jurisdictions.

Additionally:

- Clear rules reduce ambiguity
 - Standardized practices streamline operations
 - Early adoption gives Maryland businesses a competitive advantage
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6. Claim: “Enforcement will be excessive or punitive.”

Response:

The law emphasizes reasonable enforcement and often includes opportunities to cure violations before penalties are imposed. Its goal is compliance—not punishment.

Effective enforcement is essential to ensure that:

- Responsible businesses are not undercut by bad actors
 - Consumer rights are meaningful, not symbolic
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Conclusion

The Maryland Data Privacy Act represents a thoughtful, balanced approach to one of the most pressing issues of our time. It protects immigrants targeted by ICE consumers, supports responsible businesses, and aligns Maryland with a growing national movement toward stronger privacy standards.

Failing to act would leave Maryland residents exposed and businesses navigating an increasingly fragmented legal landscape.

I urge the committee to support this important legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Stew Remer