

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

Like many Americans, especially who live in rural areas like Garrett County, I value our rights to privacy. We do not want the government or companies sharing our personal data or geolocations, either for profit or to other governmental agencies, except for the intended purpose related to traffic notices or violent crimes.

We all need to be able to participate in and trust our state government's protections and systems. However, the risk of data sharing undermines this.

Our community has raised money for scholarships for community college students. We were horrified to learn that students of immigrant families may endanger their loved ones' safety by completing a FAFSA to be eligible for most tuition assistance and scholarships. This is a decision no student should ever face. We would like instead to be able to permit students to use the **Maryland Higher Education Commission MDCAP's system** to prove financial need eligibility, without fear that the data will be shared with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) through third-party data brokers.

We also encourage local residents to pursue trade skills and licenses, both to improve their lives and to support our community with qualified professionals. It benefits the state to have more qualified, registered trades 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.

These are just two of many 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.