



TechEquity Action Testimony on HB 895

Good morning. My name is Vinhcent Le, Vice President of AI Policy at TechEquity Action, a research and advocacy organization focused on ensuring that the benefits of technology flow to everyone, not just to Silicon Valley shareholders. We support HB 895/SB 387 because it will help keep things affordable and prevent a future where a mother who's too busy to shop around gets charged more for dinner ingredients, or where working families are profiled as desperate and pay premium prices for baby formula or eggs.

We're working in several states on surveillance pricing, and the pushback we hear most is around discounts. However, we can build in protections for consumer-friendly discounts, the kind that are generally available to everyone, based on clearly defined criteria and are not based on harvesting your personal information and predicting your individual willingness to pay.

The threat of personalized pricing is not theoretical. We have examples of the technology being either tested or deployed from [Instacart](#) affiliated grocers like Safeway, retailers like [Target](#), hotel booking [websites](#), and test prep companies, among others. The FTC identified [250 retailers](#) invested in personalized pricing technology. [Allstate](#) used an algorithm to set premiums, claiming their system would help provide discounts to drivers. In reality, the discounts maxed out at half a percent while price increases reached 20 percent, impermissibly targeting consumers that were most loyal to the insurer.

Corporations have every incentive to maximize prices based on personal data but this eliminates consumer surplus - transferring wealth from households to corporate balance sheets and increasing [inequality](#). With the massive information asymmetry between consumers and corporations, and increased consolidation across the economy - the average family faces a future where they have no choice but to accept surveillance pricing.

This is not the future Marylanders deserve and this is why we ask for your support of HB 895/SB 387.

Sincerely,
Vinhcent Le
Vice President of AI Policy
vinhcent@techequity.us