

Bill: HB711
Position: Favorable
Committee: Economic Matters
February 20, 2026

Favorable Testimony for HB711 – Data Privacy - Consumer Data, Public Records, and Message Switching System (Data Privacy Act)

To the Chair, Vice Chair and esteemed members of the Economic Matters Committee,

My name is Coen Doss, and I am a resident of Legislative District 32, a Master of Social Work student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and a veteran of the United States Air Force. I write to you today to express my **strong support for HB711**.

Since their inception in 2003, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have served as the domestic arms of imperialism, merging war abroad with the war at home. They restrict the movement of migrant people seeking better conditions, largely due to instability created by the U.S. in their home countries through unfair trade, sanctions, and economic exploitation, in order to effectively manage the flow of labor and reinforce global stratification. Now, they employ tactics traditionally seen in warzones such as drones, facial recognition and surveillance to instill pervasive fear within immigrant communities. By harvesting data from local utilities, motor vehicle records, and even children's schools, ICE creates an atmosphere of omnipresent suspicion, teaching community members that seeking a driver's license, reporting a crime, or enrolling a child in school could trigger detention and deportation. This designed climate of terror severs the trust between residents and the local institutions meant to serve them. A person who is ill fears the public health clinic. A victim of crime fears the police. A family fears the school office. All because they cannot know whether the information they share will be weaponized against them. In this way, imperialism operates not through distant military forces, but through the collection of data.

The passage of HB711 would begin to cut these local-imperial ties. By redefining “sensitive data” to include citizenship and immigration status, prohibiting the sale of personal data for immigration enforcement, and requiring custodians of public records to determine if access to records is being requested for deportation purposes, this bill acknowledges how surveillance is operationalized against our neighbors. It recognizes that data is not neutral but in fact a weapon mercilessly wielded. It asserts that local resources and data should not be conscripted into the service of an oppressive federal machine.

This bill is a concrete step towards demilitarizing our local institutions and reclaiming them as spaces of safety. For these reasons, **I urge a favorable report on HB711**.

Thank you for your consideration.