

Date of Hearing: Thursday 2/24/26

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TESTIMONY ON HB0711 - 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: Andrew J. Miller

My name is Andrew Miller. I am a resident of District 11B. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0711, **Data Privacy – Consumer Data, Public Records, and Message Switching System (Data Privacy Act)**

I am a Past President of Chizuk Amuno Congregation, a large Conservative synagogue in Pikesville, and I am also Chair of the Synagogue Social Justice Roundtable which includes representatives from 12 partner communities and organizations in Baltimore County, Baltimore City and Howard County.

Our sacred texts command us to love the stranger, as we ourselves were once strangers in the land of Egypt, and many of our families came to the United States to escape persecution. For me and for many in my community, protection of immigrants is therefore a sacred obligation. For the last several years our congregation and others have worked in support of Afghan refugee families fleeing the Taliban by providing direct support with the help of refugee relief organizations that worked in collaboration with the federal government until those collaborations were terminated in 2025.

Many of us have also worked over the last 9 years, together with immigrant support organizations, to protect the rights of others who arrived in our country to take refuge from oppressive conditions elsewhere in the world. Immigrants are important contributors to our economy and to our communities here in Maryland, where they make up 17% of the population and contribute to the economy, pay taxes, and create businesses that provide employment opportunities. According to a 2024 report by the Maryland Comptroller's Office, "Immigrants have long bolstered Maryland's population, and they are essential for a thriving economy and economic growth." All of us who are not Native Americans are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants, many of whom came here to escape persecution and all of whom came to seek a better life.

It has become clear in the last two months that our federal immigration enforcement agencies are not focusing their efforts primarily on capturing people who have committed serious crime. These agencies are now operating almost entirely outside the framework of federal law and the Constitution, and the tools used for data collection will facilitate intimidation,

detention and deportation of people they wish to target, whether they are asylum seekers, green-card holders, or undocumented individuals who have lived here for decades and who have contributed to society and the economy and have no criminal record. And we have read in the news that ICE is in the process of collecting information from whatever data sources are accessible to them.

Previous bills passed by the General Assembly have restricted government sharing of MVA and State data without a warrant, but much of the same data can be derived from commercial sources and third-party data brokers. Thus, despite the intentions of previous legislation, loopholes in the law still allow targeting of vulnerable people. HB0711 seeks to close off access to private data that can be accessed through these back-door approaches even when it cannot be obtained directly from government databases.

Private data in the hands of an immigration enforcement agency that chooses to use it as a weapon and facilitate unlawful and unconstitutional detention without recourse to due process is a threat to our communities and families. We need to close the loophole in existing law.

The choice before us is clear. I urge you to act with courage, compassion, and moral clarity.

Therefore I respectfully ask this committee to return a favorable report on HB0711.