

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 Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

My name is Rev. Kristin Schmidt, I am a resident of Montgomery County, Senior Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring, and a member of Action In Montgomery and the Maryland Just Power Alliance. I write today in strong support of HB0711 – the Data Privacy Act.

In an increasingly digitized world where financial, health, and other deeply personal and sensitive data is collected and stored digitally, it is more important than ever that government clearly define the purposes for which different kinds of information may be shared, and place limits on what kinds of information may be shared with whom. Moreover, when the government has possession of such information, it is even more important that data be used only for the express purpose for which it was originally collected. Should such limits not be established legally, residents may feel that they cannot participate fully in civic life out of concern for the ways their information may be used.

I want Maryland residents to be able to trust their state government so that they feel they can participate as fully as possible in decision-making and civic and community life. I support HB0711 because it would close existing loopholes in Maryland's privacy laws that allow sensitive personal information collected by state agencies to be shared with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) through third-party data brokers and law enforcement data-sharing networks. I vehemently oppose use of the taxes I pay to the state of Maryland so that the federal government can violate the rule of law and the rights of Maryland residents. Using data entrusted to Maryland agencies for the purpose of endangering children, people with disabilities, workers, and families regardless of immigration status is a huge violation of trust. Please move this bill forward and support its passage so that Maryland does not become complicit in providing information to the Department of Homeland Security or ICE so that they can further target Maryland residents.

When data is misused and too-widely shared, all people's privacy is at risk, regardless of immigration status. Your committee has the power to protect the residents of Maryland from this clear and present threat, so I respectfully encourage you to issue a favorable report on HB0711.

With gratitude,

Rev. Kristin Schmidt

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