

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0711 - Data Privacy - Consumer Data, Public
Records, and Message Switching System (Data Privacy Act)
Chair Kriselda Valderrama & Members of the Economic Matters Committee
February 24, 2026**

Chair Valderrama and Members of the Economic Matters Committee, my name is Jennifer Hess. I have lived in Silver Spring, Maryland, for almost 30 years. I am among a group of neighbors who last year formed North Woodside Civil Resistance out of concern for the threat to our democracy posed by the actions of the Trump administration. I am writing to strongly support HB 0711, an essential complement to HB 0264, the Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act of 2026.

This body has taken care to protect the information of everyone in our state through the 2021 Driver Privacy Act. Unfortunately, there is a lawless government agency out to undermine all of these protections. This agency has made multimillion dollar contracts with third-party data brokers such as Lexis-Nexus, Palantir, Equifax, and even the spyware producer Paragon. These companies are now making huge profits by selling access to their massive databases of personal information. While HB0264 would protect the selling of personal data gathered by the state, HB0711 protects *consumer data* from being sold to the most lawless security force in American history.

As members of this body are well aware, ICE behaves as a law unto itself. Masked unidentified agents terrorize our communities with no regard for basic American protections such as due process, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and protection from unreasonable searches and seizures. ICE chooses its targets using classic racial and employment profiling. And they're targeting law-abiding immigrants attending their court hearings. This is not a strategy to protect public safety. This is ethnic cleansing.

Of course it's not just immigrants being targeted. ICE is actively collecting data on U.S. citizens like myself and my neighbors at North Woodside Civil Resistance who are objecting to the misconduct of this rogue federal agency.

ICE agents' actions are a threat to our basic democratic freedoms. We do not need to make their job easier. Tightening up our private data protections with Data Privacy - Consumer Data, Public Records, and Message Switching System and the Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act would be two steps in the right direction. Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Hess
1910 Luzerne Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Jenny.c.hess@outlook.com