

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0264 - Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act of 2026

Senate Finance Committee

Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Anne Manuel. I have lived in Silver Spring, Maryland, for more than 40 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 0264, the Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act of 2026.

If I had known 20 years ago that I was going to give this testimony today, I would have considered myself paranoid and advised myself to get a grip. Who on earth could possibly want my driver's license data and to what end? What kind of loser would want to collect data from my cell phone? But times have changed and now we've all learned to jealously guard our personal information. In addition, 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, all in an effort to satisfy Stephen Miller's insatiable appetite for deportations.

These companies are now making huge profits by selling access to their massive databases of personal information, including names, addresses, court records, probation schedules, phone data, drivers' license information, and data from our license plates. And they are selling that sensitive personal information 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.

And is anyone really fooled by their "worst of the worst rhetoric"? No. 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 the Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act of 2026 is a step in the right direction. Thank you for your consideration.

Anne Manuel
2021 Luzerne Ave
Silver Spring, MD. 20910
301-742-4121
nightsky11@verizon.net