



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

April 1st 2026

HB264

Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act of 2026

Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 264**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 264 establishes important safeguards around how State government agencies collect, maintain, process, and retain personal information. It limits unnecessary data collection, requires that certain information be deleted or de-identified when no longer needed, and mandates that agencies provide clear and accessible privacy notices. Additionally, the bill requires each unit of State government to designate a Privacy Officer to ensure accountability and proper oversight of data practices.

The intent of this bill is to strengthen trust between Maryland residents and their government by ensuring that personal information is handled responsibly and transparently. In an era where data is increasingly central to how services are delivered; it is essential that individuals feel confident their information is protected and not misused. This legislation provides a proactive framework that balances operational needs with the fundamental right to privacy.

Respecting privacy is an extension of respecting human dignity, ensuring that individuals are not reduced to data points but treated with care and integrity. The benefits of this bill extend to individuals, families, and communities across Maryland. Strong data protections help prevent misuse, reduce the risk of breaches, and allow residents to engage with public services without fear. Communities benefit from increased trust in public institutions, while families gain peace of mind knowing their personal information is safeguarded. This is especially important for vulnerable populations who may be at greater risk if their data is improperly handled.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 264**.