



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

February 10, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
6 Bladen Street, Room 165
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 264 - MARYLAND DATA PRIVACY AND PROTECTION ACT OF 2026 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Wells and Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report for House Bill 264 (HB 264).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Family Investment Administration implements the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other economic assistance programs that would be affected by HB 264, if passed. This proposal would create standardized, statewide procedures to protect the sensitive data that belongs to Marylanders, including eligibility and enrollment data related to economic safety net programs. DHS supports efforts to improve and expand data privacy protection efforts across all state agencies, through the 'whole-of-government approach' described by the Department of Information Technology (DoIT). This bill would also support our recent efforts to protect Marylanders from federal government overreach related to the unauthorized collection and misuse of Marylanders' personal data.

Early last year, DHS took decisive action to shield Marylanders' sensitive data from unauthorized release. In partnership with Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown, DHS joined 21 other states in a [lawsuit](#) against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) over its efforts to collect customer data related to SNAP. Additionally, DHS submitted [public comments](#) on USDA's proposed regulation to demand SNAP

participants' personally identifiable information (PII). Federal agencies are aggressively attempting to collect public benefit customers' personal data for unlawful or undisclosed purposes, including federal immigration enforcement. DHS stands alongside DoIT in their efforts to minimize Marylanders' data vulnerabilities and prevent situations where their personal information could be misused. HB 264 codifies the protections necessary to prevent unnecessary and unlawful data collection and misuse.

HB 264 would establish standard definitions for protected personal information to include Marylanders' citizenship status, Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), and confidential health data. Although statutory protections for some forms of personal information already exist in Maryland law, HB 264 would make data privacy practices consistent, applicable to all agencies, and ensure that public benefits data is collected exclusively for the administration of those programs. DHS already maintains a strong defense against improper federal data collection and ensures that industry-standard data protections are followed. HB 264 would codify the practices across every state agency in Maryland.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 264 to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at justin.hayes1@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael López', written in a cursive style.

Rafael López
Secretary