

Testimony to the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

**HB 264** Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act of 2026

**Position: Favorable**

Submitted by Cathy Stogel on behalf of Indivisible Howard County  
Feb. 3, 2026

On behalf of our 1,500 plus members of Indivisible Howard County I am submitting testimony in support of HB 264.

The Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act, HB 264, would add some needed privacy protections to data about Maryland residents kept by the State government. This would help reduce exploitation by malicious private or federal actors which, as we know, is a growing problem.

ICE is increasingly using non-consensual, warrant-less surveillance methods which violate constitutional protections and pose a significant threat to civil liberties. This act would block ICE from accessing data (ie DMV records, utility records, health records, and location data) without judicial warrants and would require sensitive information to be deleted when no longer needed.

The use of invasive tools has caused disruption and fear within immigrant communities, discouraging people (even those who are documented) from seeking needed public services such as healthcare and from sending their children to school. We cannot sit back and allow private or federal actors to use personal, sensitive data to advance their own self serving agenda.

These surveillance tools are used to target not only immigrants but also critics of the current administration, protesters, and others.

This important act would give more strength to Maryland's "data minimization" principle established by the Maryland Online Data Privacy Act of 2024. It would require Maryland state departments to clearly communicate how they use and store data, and requires them to designate Privacy Officers.

In short, this bill would be a major contribution to the State of Maryland's ability to protect its residents' civil rights and from being targeted for harm. We urge you to submit a favorable report.

Thank you,  
Cathy Stogel representing Indivisible Howard County