



## Office of The Mayor Celina R. Benitez

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1 Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712 Telephone: (301) 985-6585 [MountRainierMD.org](http://MountRainierMD.org)

Date: February 27, 2026

Re: **House Bill 1317 State Government – Data-Sharing Agreements and Personal Identifying Information – Prohibition and Reporting (Maryland Data Privacy and Federal Shield Act)**

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **House Bill 1317**, the Maryland Data Privacy and Federal Shield Act.

This legislation takes a thoughtful and necessary step to protect the personal identifying information of Maryland residents by prohibiting certain data-sharing agreements with federal entities and requiring transparency and reporting when such requests are made. At a time when public confidence in data security and privacy protections is critical, HB1317 establishes clear guardrails that reinforce Maryland’s longstanding commitment to civil liberties, due process, and responsible governance.

Maryland residents routinely provide personal identifying information to State and local agencies to access essential services — whether for public health programs, tax administration, licensing, education, or public safety. That information is entrusted to government with the expectation that it will be used solely for its intended purpose. HB1317 reinforces that trust by ensuring that personal data collected by the State is not disclosed for unrelated federal enforcement activities absent appropriate legal authority.

Importantly, this bill does not interfere with lawful cooperation between state and federal partners where required by court order or existing law. Instead, it establishes clear standards and reporting requirements to ensure that any sharing of personal identifying information is deliberate, lawful, and transparent.

From a governance perspective, HB1317 provides needed uniformity across State agencies. Rather than leaving individual departments to interpret federal requests independently, the bill establishes consistent policy direction, reducing legal ambiguity and protecting both residents and public servants.

In addition, strong data privacy protections support economic confidence. Businesses and residents alike are more willing to engage with government services when they know sensitive information will be safeguarded. Clear statutory standards reduce liability exposure and reinforce Maryland’s reputation as a state that prioritizes privacy and constitutional protections.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 1317.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on public safety and community trust. Please feel free to contact me at 301-985-6585 or via email [MayorBenitez@MountRainierMd.org](mailto:MayorBenitez@MountRainierMd.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Celina R. Benitez*

Mayor Celina R. Benitez, City of Mount Rainier.