

Friday, February 6, 2026

Dear Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee,

I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am testifying in **support of HB264, the Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act.**

President Trump's cruel, racist, xenophobic, and transphobic attacks on immigrants, trans people, and other marginalized communities has only worsened through the first year of his second administration. It is incumbent upon Maryland to protect the people that he is dedicated to demonizing: our friends, family members, and neighbors, hard-working people who help build our communities. They don't deserve to live in fear.

In Maryland and nationwide, federal immigration authorities have a history of abusing state-held databases containing personal information in order to help them target immigrants. In Maryland, after Maryland allowed undocumented immigrants to apply for driver's licenses in 2013, ICE began using MVA data in this way. This is a vicious and counterproductive attempt to force immigrants to live in the shadows when they would otherwise readily adhere to local laws and regulations that keep everyone safe. The same practices could also be used to target trans people and other vulnerable communities targeted by the president's vitriolic political ideology.

Building on previous legislation, HB264 adds privacy protections to Maryland residents' personal data kept by the Maryland State government with the goal of reducing the risk for that data to be exploited by malicious private or federal actors. This includes requiring sensitive information to be deleted or de-identified when it is no longer needed. The procedural updates and protections in HB264 build on Maryland's pre-existing "data minimization" principle, which was established in the Maryland Online Data Privacy Act of 2024. HB264 also tasks Maryland state departments to clearly communicate how they use and store data, as well as requiring them to designate Privacy Officers.

This bill would be a major contribution to the State of Maryland's ability to protect its residents from being targeted for harm, reducing ICE's ability to find noncitizens and, I hope, doing the same for trans people and other groups declared as targets by the president for further misuse and abuse of federal power.

I do not want Maryland to use our resources to help President Trump conduct his racist, bigoted, cruel anti-immigrant and transphobic campaigns. We must stand up for our friends, family, and neighbors by refusing to be complicit in his bigotry. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in **support of HB264, the Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
Baltimore, MD 21209