



Testimony - HB 264, Maryland Data Privacy and Protection Act of 2026
Favorable
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
February 10, 2026
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Honorable Chairwoman Wells & Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

SEIU Local 500, which represents thousands of public sector and nonprofit workers across Maryland, including early childhood educators, school support staff, college faculty, and other public servants strongly supports House Bill 264.

SEIU Local 500 believes that protecting personal information is not only a matter of cybersecurity, but a fundamental safeguard against government overreach. Our members are required to share sensitive personal information with the State as a condition of employment—often including home addresses, financial information, biometric data, health information, and immigration or citizenship status. Without clear limits on how this information is collected, retained, and shared, workers are left vulnerable to misuse, mission creep, and unintended harm.

HB 264 meaningfully strengthens Maryland law by affirming that personal information collected by the State must be limited to a legitimate government purpose, narrowly tailored to the minimum necessary, and retained only for as long as it is reasonably needed. These guardrails are critical to ensuring that information shared for administrative purposes is not later repurposed for surveillance, enforcement actions, or other uses unrelated to why it was collected in the first place.

We are especially encouraged by the bill's expanded and modernized definition of "personal information" and "sensitive data," which explicitly includes biometric data, precise geolocation data, health and mental health information, genetic data, and immigration or citizenship status. These categories reflect the real-world risks workers face today, particularly immigrant workers and those in public-facing or politically sensitive roles, who are disproportionately harmed when sensitive data is mishandled or shared beyond its original scope.

HB 264 also promotes transparency and accountability by requiring State units to clearly disclose why personal information is collected, whether it will be shared, and what rights individuals have to inspect or correct their records. For workers, this transparency is essential to building trust and ensuring that compliance with government processes does not come at the expense of personal safety or privacy.

Finally, the bill's requirements for privacy officers, standardized privacy notices, and limits on third-party contractors' use of personal data are critical protections in an era where data brokers and secondary markets increasingly profit from government-held information. Government should never be a pipeline through which workers' personal information is commodified or redistributed beyond their control.

Public servants should not have to choose between doing their jobs and protecting their privacy. HB 264 strikes an appropriate balance between effective governance and individual rights, and it sends a clear message that Maryland values data minimization, purpose limitation, and personal dignity.

SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 264.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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