



JUSTICE FOR ALL

MARYLAND HOUSE GOVERNMENT, LABOR, AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
TESTIMONY OF MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE

**IN SUPPORT OF HB 264 – MARYLAND DATA PRIVACY AND
PROTECTION ACT OF 2026**

February 10, 2026

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Chair Wells and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 264.

My name is Megan Good, and I am a staff attorney at the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS). MVLS is the oldest and largest provider of pro bono civil legal services to low-income Marylanders,¹ and our mission is to reduce barriers to justice through free civil legal help, community engagement, and advocacy for equitable laws.

In our work with clients, it is clear how vitally important it is that all residents in Maryland can safely and confidently access essential government services and social safety net programs without fearing if, how, or when their personal information may be transmitted to another entity and used against them.

Any barriers that decrease the likelihood of residents accessing services and supports they need increase their vulnerability to exploitation.

In the course of our work with clients, we regularly rely on the resources offered by other entities to assist with providing holistic care and support to community members, whether it is the services of behavioral health providers, social services agencies, utility assistance programs, law enforcement agencies, or housing programs. The possibilities are numerous, but one thing remains clear – the needs of our most vulnerable community members are complex, and we require a network of trusted supports to help our clients access justice and maintain their wellbeing.

¹ Since MVLS’ founding in 1981, our statewide panel of over 1,700 volunteers has provided free legal services to over 115,000 Marylanders in a wide range of civil legal matters. In FY25, MVLS volunteers and staff lawyers provided legal services to 3,233 people across the state.

Protecting data privacy in Maryland is a core requirement for maintaining a public service sector that we can trust, both as residents and as service providers.

At MVLS, we serve residents of Maryland regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, age, religion, disability status, sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender presentation, sexual orientation, or immigration status. To do so effectively, we need to know that public agencies and service providers to whom we are referring clients can ensure that any data collected about their identities will be protected and not place them at risk of harm.

For these reasons, we **strongly support HB 264** and ask you to do the same. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.